

Strident, Ambiguous and Duplicitous Ukraine and the 2008 Russia-Georgia War

TARAS KUZIO

Abstract: Ukraine's ruling elites were unable to fashion a coordinated response to Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia because of domestic political instability and in-fighting within the Orange Coalition that won the September 2007 elections. These internal tensions within Ukraine's pro-Western forces were exacerbated by conflict between them and the pro-Russian opposition that adopted all of Russia's positions on Georgia. Russia accused Ukraine's elites of supporting Georgia with weapons, mercenaries and diplomacy. Ukraine's relations with Russia are at their worst since the disintegration of the USSR, and Ukraine is in third place behind Georgia's second place as two countries disliked by Russians. Poor diplomatic relations, Russia's re-assertiveness in the region and its strident opposition to NATO enlargement into Eurasia, coupled with Russia leaving open territorial claims to Sevastopol, remain a potent mix for European security.

Keywords: Crimea, Sevastopol, Tymoshenko, Ukraine, Yushchenko

Russia's August 2008 invasion of Georgia and de facto annexation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia will undoubtedly have repercussions for Ukraine's security. Although Ukraine had high hopes—following the Orange Revolution and election of the pro-Western Viktor Yushchenko—of quickly integrating into Euro-Atlantic structures, only NATO opened its door in 2005-06 but closed it in 2007-08 due to low public support within Ukraine and the growing appeasement of Russia by key Western European NATO members. The EU continues not to view Ukraine as a future member. Ukraine's security vacuum is coupled with instability, preventing the adoption of a unified position on Russia's aggression in Georgia, which has plagued the entire Yushchenko administration and Russian assertiveness in the region. Russian-Ukrainian relations have deteriorated to their lowest point since the disintegration of the USSR. This poor state of affairs, combined with Russia's willingness and legal justification for defending "Russian citizens" abroad, opens up the possibility that localized conflict in the Crimea and Sevastopol can no longer be ruled out.¹

Taras Kuzio is senior fellow and chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto and editor of *Ukraine Analyst*. He has been a visiting professor at the Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies at George Washington University and a resident fellow at the Center for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Toronto. Copyright © Heldref Publications 2009

This article is divided into five sections. In the first section, I analyze Ukrainian security policies and security dilemmas in the aftermath of the August 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia,² taking into consideration that NATO and EU membership are not likely for Ukraine in the foreseeable future. In the second section, I analyze Ukrainian-Georgian relations and the close ideological, personal, and security bonds between Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko and Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili. Although these particular connections emerged after the 2003 Rose Revolution and 2004 Orange Revolution, Ukraine and Georgia had a well-established security relationship under President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine and President Edward Shevardnadze of Georgia until 2003-04.

In the third and fourth sections of the article, I discuss the likelihood of the Crimea becoming the next target for Russian territorial assertiveness in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Ukraine's security responses to what Kyiv sees as growing Russian nationalism. Russian opinion polls also show that the United States, Georgia, and Ukraine are the three most disliked countries in Russia. In these sections, I discuss Russia's inability to come to terms with Ukrainian sovereignty, independence, and territorial control over the Crimea, as well as Ukraine's right to have different national interests from Russia.

In the final section, I discuss how the Russia-Georgia war affected Ukrainian domestic politics (for a breakdown by leader and party, see the appendix). This section argues that existing divisions within the Orange Coalition prevented a unified response to the war, although both Our Ukraine³ and the Bloc Yulia Tymoshenko (BYuT), as the coalition's two key political forces, feuded, leading to the collapse of the coalition on September 3.⁴ Both wings of the democratic (i.e. Orange) coalition supported Georgia's territorial integrity. The oppositional Party of Regions' official stance, in support of the recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, split the party in the Ukrainian parliament. The party's resolution in support of independence for South Ossetia and Abkhazia was supported by the Communist Party, but failed to win sufficient votes to be adopted. A similar resolution passed in the Crimean parliament.

Ukraine's Security Dilemmas

Russia's invasion of Georgia has reshaped the geopolitical region and its domestic politics. Ukraine and other states in Eurasia believe that Russia has effectively annexed two Georgian territories without any major repercussions. From Ukraine's vantage point, this usurpation was compounded by the perception that the EU gave its seal of approval to a flawed peace plan beneficial to Russia. By the winter of 2008-09, the EU and NATO had rushed to repair their relations with Russia in the wake of their previous support for Georgia. The EU believed it could begin to resume normal relations as soon as Russia withdrew its troops to preconflict lines, and a majority of EU members sought to relaunch their interrupted negotiations for a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Russia. This would make it "as if the Georgian war had never happened," quipped the *Economist*.⁵

With NATO and EU membership unlikely in the short term, Ukraine's security is now in its own hands for the foreseeable future.⁶ In return for giving up the world's third-largest stash of nuclear weapons a decade ago, Ukraine received security assurances from five nuclear powers, one of which was a country that had repeatedly undermined Georgia's territorial integrity—Russia. These security assurances have little practical value in the

event of a Ukraine-Russia conflict, as seen when NATO rebuffed Ukraine's 2003 request for support repelling Russia's designs on Tuzla Island, to the east of the Crimea. As Horbulin and Badrak argued, the nuclear powers are, "de facto demonstrating a rejection of their responsibilities" and "those who are not speaking of a repetition of Munich in 1938 today in Europe and Ukraine are only ignoring the facts."⁷ Ukraine's post-Russia-Georgia war mood was captured by one commentary: "The U.S., which spent so much time, energy and money on Georgia, has in effect abandoned its ally. This will have to be taken into account by other countries that look to the White House for protection from Russia."⁸ After the war, many Western publications and political leaders asked openly if the Crimea could be Russia's next target.⁹ Ukrainians fear that the new U.S. administration's 're-setting' of relations with Russia will leave them in the Russian sphere of influence.

NATO membership remains closed to Ukraine because of low public support within the country—and enlargement fatigue among key NATO members such as Germany who prioritize good relations with Russia over Ukrainian and European security—and the EU has never offered membership. The September 2008 EU-Ukraine summit again sidestepped the issue of Ukrainian membership, instead offering a nebulous associate membership with no suggestion of future membership and "little besides warm words of support to offer."¹⁰ As one commentary noted, "the EU's plans for Ukraine are at present anything but convincing."¹¹ The EU's closed-door position has been at least consistent over the last two decades in its refusal to give countries in the European region of the CIS any membership perspectives. Ukraine was never offered an association agreement in the 1990s and has never been treated like the Western Balkans and Turkey, which have been considered for membership. Ukraine remains the only country seeking EU membership that still faces a closed door.

Some Western media¹² wrote that, in the aftermath of the 2008 war, the EU should give Ukraine a signal of its future membership prospects. The *Financial Times* noted that, "the EU badly needs to come up with a convincing strategy for rescuing the country from the geopolitical no-man's land in which it has languished since the Soviet Union's demise in 1991."¹³ This view spread to some EU governments and EU officials. UK foreign minister David Miliband described Ukraine as a "European country" and suggested that, after fulfilling EU criteria, it "should be accepted as a full member" of the organization.¹⁴ EU enlargement commissioner Olli Rehn said, "Ukraine could be the next political pressure point for Russia. . . . Therefore it is important from a stability point of view to send a positive signal that it is possible for Ukraine to progress towards the Union."¹⁵ Former U.S. ambassador to NATO Robert Hunter agrees with the Yulia Tymoshenko government's policy of prioritising the EU over NATO,¹⁶ but EU enlargement fatigue, already in place in 2005, has deepened after the war and the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008-09.¹⁷

NATO's open-door policy always stood in contrast to that of the EU. Ukraine, which since 1994 has been one of the most active partner countries in NATO's Partnership for Peace program of security cooperation with non-NATO members, was repeatedly told by NATO during the Kuchma era (1994-2004) that it would be admitted if it embarked on a path of democratic reforms. This position has now been changed by Germany to include additional demands that were never made to aspirant countries during earlier rounds of NATO enlargement (i.e. political stability and good relations with Russia). Both the EU and NATO have adopted double standards. Today, Ukraine is a democracy and a market economy (however young), and, therefore, far more advanced than either Bulgaria or

Romania in the late 1990s, when the EU placed them on membership tracks. NATO's oft-touted open-door policy has become a closed-door policy at the insistence of Western Europeans eager to avoid offending Russia through NATO's enlargement. New demands, such as political stability, that have challenged Ukraine before it could be admitted into a Membership Action Plan (MAP), were not demanded of earlier candidates, most notably Macedonia, which entered a MAP immediately following a civil war in 2000-01. Not content to block Ukraine and Georgia's NATO membership, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium are also keeping Ukraine's door to the EU firmly closed.

Neither Russia's opposition nor its own energy dependency explains Western Europe's obstructive policy; Russia has never opposed Ukraine's EU membership. In addition, energy reliance is a red herring. France, Italy and Germany rely on Russia for only 26 to 40 percent of their gas imports. Meanwhile, Poland, Lithuania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia, which all support NATO and EU membership for Ukraine, import between 61 and 100 percent of their gas from Russia.¹⁸

Domestically, Ukraine's integration into trans-Atlantic structures has been undermined by political instability and inter-elite squabbling. On three occasions during his presidency, Yushchenko has elevated his personal dislike of Yulia Tymoshenko above the goal of creating a unified Orange Coalition and government, a step that Western governments have demanded as proof of Ukraine's commitment to deep-seated reform. In 2005 and 2008, the Tymoshenko government was removed or undermined not by the pro-Russian Party of Regions opposition but by its own ostensible partner, President Yushchenko. After the 2006 elections, Yushchenko's unwillingness to see Tymoshenko return as prime minister destroyed the Orange Coalition before it was even able to take power, thereby undermining Ukraine's path to a NATO MAP that was entirely feasible at the Riga Summit in November 2006. Former presidential chief Oleh Rybachuk said, "I am convinced that we cannot place under doubt the stability of NATO if it takes in a country like Ukraine before we first have to stabilise Ukraine."¹⁹

The Bush administration had sought to fast-track Ukraine and Georgia into NATO after the 2003 and 2004 Rose and Orange Revolutions.²⁰ Yushchenko repaired U.S.-Ukrainian relations during an April 2005 visit to Washington, a month after which Ukraine was invited to join NATO's intensive dialogue on membership issues. The Bush administration hoped to crown the election of an Orange Coalition and government in the March 2006 elections with a visit by President Bush in June followed by Ukraine's invitation to join a MAP in November. However, this fast-track strategy collapsed after the anticrisis coalition, headed by Party of Regions leader Viktor Yanukovich, came to power in August 2006. The anticrisis coalition was hostile toward Ukraine entering a MAP and toward Ukraine's NATO membership. At the April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, opposition within NATO to granting MAPs to Ukraine and Georgia was based on the grounds of both low public support and political instability in the former and unresolved frozen conflicts in the latter. Ukraine's frequent elections and frequently changing governments negatively affected its ability to launch a public relations campaign in support of the advantages of NATO membership. Public support for membership, although regionally concentrated, with low support in Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine, stood at a respectable one-third in the 1990s but declined to twenty percent after a U.S.-led coalition invaded Iraq in spring 2003. (Ukrainians mistakenly believed that the Iraqi operation was NATO-led because of the public perception of NATO's close association with the United States.) However,

this level of support was not exceptional. Many Central and Eastern European states had low support for NATO membership until their governments launched public information campaigns. Referenda on joining NATO, which are not obligatory, have typically produced support of only about 50 to 60 percent, with two exceptions: Romania and Poland.

Ukraine has not dealt with the issue of low public support for NATO membership, support that has not increased during Yushchenko's presidency. Pro-NATO Ukrainian political forces, including Yushchenko in 2004, have never included NATO membership in their election programs. Of the three Orange political forces, only Our Ukraine was staunchly in favor of NATO membership. The Socialists were against, and BYuT was cautious on the issue. "When the majority of the

people of Ukraine will be ready to vote for NATO then she will also be for NATO," said Our Ukraine deputy and former Prime Minister Yuriy Yekhanurov, following that "When there will be 51 percent for NATO she will be saying that she also supports this course."²¹

While support for NATO membership could conceivably grow within the so-called centrist camp of political parties,

such an evolution within the center-left—which, for example, took place in Spain during the post-Franco transition to democracy—would take longer and require a generational change in leadership from those in their 60s such as Socialist Party leader Oleksandr Moroz. The Socialist Party is the only center-left party in the CIS that is a member of the Socialist International.

At the Bucharest NATO summit in April 2008, NATO decided that Ukraine and Georgia would join NATO in the future, but a Western European group of countries led by Germany balked at giving Ukraine a MAP. The December 2008 NATO ministerial meeting took up a British proposal to bypass MAPs by developing Ukrainian security and political reforms through the NATO-Ukraine commission established in 1997, when NATO and Ukraine signed a charter on distinctive partnership. This step merely befuddles NATO-Ukraine relations, however, as Ukraine already has in place an annual action plan, launched in 2003 after the November 2002 Prague NATO summit. The action plan incorporates the same political, economic, and security reforms as a MAP. Former defense minister Yevhen Marchuk said, "In effect, the Action Plan is de facto a Membership Action Plan. Because nearly all of the types of activities outlined in MAP are in the Action Plan." Steven Pifer, U.S. ambassador to Ukraine when the action plans were launched, believes they are "95 percent of a MAP." President Yushchenko supported this view, saying, "We have in effect been functioning under a MAP for quite a long time. Ukraine completely fulfills annual target cooperation plans." The 2009 action plan envisions 400 activities to be carried out between Ukraine and NATO.²²

Although it is not a member, Ukraine has participated in every NATO operation since it joined NATO's Partnership for Peace program in January 1994, including that in Afghanistan. It remains one the largest European contributors of forces and resources to UN peacekeeping operations and has participated in every peacekeeping operation under NATO command since joining Partnership for Peace. Ukrainian units currently operate in

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NATO and UN operations in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Liberia, Lebanon, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Georgia. Ukraine is the tenth leading contributor of personnel and the third largest provider of strategic air transportation for UN operations.

Ukraine is faced by the fact that one of the five declared nuclear powers that gave it security assurances in return for its denuclearization (i.e., Russia) is also the major threat to its territorial integrity. Senior U.S. officials, including former Vice President Dick Cheney during his September 2008 visit to Ukraine, have expressed support for Ukraine's territorial integrity if it were to come under threat, but it remains unclear how such support could be forthcoming. In the event of Russia's occupation of Sevastopol or the Crimea, no country or international organization—including the U.S.—would act on the 1994 security assurances and come to Ukraine's defense. Ukraine's security options remain poor by virtue of three factors: the West's weak response to Russia's invasion of Georgia; NATO's new demands for Ukraine to fulfill before it is invited into the MAP process, coupled with the EU's perennially closed doors; and domestic infighting among pro-Western forces that has led to political instability and crises throughout Yushchenko's presidency.

Following Georgia's Rose and Ukraine's Orange Revolutions, hopes of each country's rapid entry into NATO did not materialize. The 2006 NATO summit in Riga was perhaps the one NATO summit where Ukraine and Georgia could have entered a MAP before opposition in Western Europe began to grow beginning in 2007. Following five years of Orange disunity and Ukrainian political crises, coupled with the Russia-Georgia war, it remains unclear if the two countries' future prospects for NATO membership remain interconnected.²³

Ukraine-Georgia Relations

The Yushchenko-Saakashvili relationship is a political alliance based on the commonality of the 2003 Rose and 2004 Orange Revolutions,²⁴ a common desire to join NATO, support for alternative routes to Russia energy sources and membership of the GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova) regional group.²⁵ Ukraine and Georgia have also cooperated through the Community of Democratic Choice, created in 2005. The two countries contributed the third-largest military force to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq (Ukraine between 2003-2005, and Georgia since 2006). Russia's relations with Georgia and Ukraine declined significantly following their democratic revolutions, which Russian authorities and a majority of Russian citizens saw as U.S.-backed conspiracies.²⁶

The demand of Ukraine's foreign ministry that Russia withdraw its troops and respect Georgia's territorial integrity continues a longstanding Ukrainian position of supporting the territorial integrity of states. Ukraine's offer to act as a mediator is, again, a proposal that Russia has repeatedly turned down. Ukraine's unease at Russia's continued territorial demands and Russia's reluctance to withdraw its forces from Moldova and Georgia led to a Ukrainian presidential decree ordering the government to prepare legislation and conduct negotiations with Russia on a full withdrawal of Black Sea Fleet personnel by 2017.

As in Georgia and Moldova, Russia is using the threat of separatism to influence Ukraine's foreign policy orientation and accommodation to Russian demands. Russian nationalist, Communist, and pro-regime politicians are unanimous in using the threat of separatism in the Crimea and territorial claims on Sevastopol as potential bargaining chips to block Ukraine's NATO membership. This reflects longstanding Russian views, echoed

by President Vladimir Putin at the April 2009 NATO-Russia Council, of Ukraine's supposed fragility—that the country would disintegrate if it joined NATO.²⁷ Lending support to this position, Crimean KPU leader Leonid Grach has threatened to support the peninsula's secession if Ukraine joined NATO, a threat similar to that used by Russia in South Ossetia.²⁸ During the 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia, Russian Communist leader Genady Zyuganov also arrived in the Crimea to hold negotiations with Crimean Communists on a "joint anti-NATO struggle." Zyuganov supported the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and Sevastopol's transfer to Russia.²⁹ The pro-regime Unified Russia Party and the opposition Russian Communist Party both hold the same views about using the threat of Crimean separatism (i.e. repeating the Russian model of detaching South Ossetia from Georgia) if Ukraine does not accommodate itself to Russian geopolitical demands, including stopping NATO encroachment into the CIS.

The stakes are high for Ukraine in Russia's de facto annexation of South Ossetia. The removal or weakening of the Saakashvili regime would undermine the Ukrainian-Georgian partnership, destroy the GUAM group (which already has passive Moldovan and Azerbaijani members), and, thereby, neutralize the pro-Western wing of the CIS. Ukraine was the only CIS country and GUAM member to support Georgia during the August 2008 war. However, no CIS country supported Russia's recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and the silence of Belarus on this question was particularly conspicuous. The war undermined the GUAM regional group and put in doubt its ambitious plans for alternative oil pipelines from Azerbaijan through Georgia to Ukraine's port of Odessa. Ukraine has already built a pipeline from Odessa to Brody that connects to the former Soviet *druzhba* (friendship) pipeline running across its territory. The aim was to take this further north into Poland, thereby reducing the dependency of Ukraine, Poland, and Moldova on imported Russian oil.

The war opened up key questions about Ukraine's control over the Crimea and whether the peninsula would be the next region to fall to Russia's new assertiveness in the CIS. Russian President Dmitri Medvedev's August 11, 2009 open letter to Yushchenko accused him of following "anti-Russian" policies in seeking NATO membership, "repressing" the Russian language and restricting the movements of the Black Sea Fleet. Two Russian diplomats were expelled in August from Odessa and the Crimea, accused by Kyiv of subversion (i.e. supporting separatists) and espionage. These developments came amidst the Russian State Duma amending legislation to permit Russian military forces to intervene abroad in defense of Russian citizens. It was not lost on Ukrainian leaders that most South Ossetians had illegally received Russian passports; Russian diplomats in the Crimea and Odessa have been accused of distributing Russian passports.³⁰

Is the Crimea Next?

The situation in the Crimea³¹ is different from frozen conflicts in CIS countries where Russian and Armenian troops act as either peacekeepers or occupation forces.³² The situation in the Crimea never turned into a frozen conflict during the first half of the 1990s because the separatist movement was undermined by Ukrainian intelligence services, Crimean indifference, and internal divisions within the separatist movement.

Two additional factors helped avoid a conflict-impasse, as well. First, the Crimea was upgraded from an oblast to an autonomous republic in January 1991, and a constitution

recognizing Ukraine's territorial integrity was adopted by the Crimean parliament in October 1998. In Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Georgia, autonomous entities were either dissolved or never offered by central governments. The resulting conflict led to bloodshed that divided national minorities from the central government. Second, all of the Soviet security forces in the Crimea were nationalized by the newly independent Ukraine, with the one exception of the Black Sea Fleet, which was divided between Russia and Ukraine in the May 1997 treaty. However, in Moldova, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, the newly independent central governments failed to take control of Soviet military units. These units then transferred weapons to local separatist groups, which turned them on the central governments of these countries.

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Crimean separatists failed to receive mass support in the Crimea because of the lack of an ethnic Russian base to mobilize. Although the 2001 Ukrainian census reported that the Crimea had a slim 58 percent ethnic Russian majority—a decline from 65 percent in the 1989 Soviet census—competing local territorial, ethnic Russian, and Soviet-pan-Slavic identities cut across

these various identities. Further, the Crimean Communist Party and pro-Ukrainian presidential centrist parties opposed separatism in the 1990s, effectively narrowing the base of support for separatism to only extremist Russian nationalists. The Crimean separatist movement finally collapsed in 1995, when President Kuchma disbanded the Crimean presidency that had been established the year before by his predecessor, Leonid Kravchuk. The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) had successfully subverted the separatist movement from within, compounding internal divisions between different separatist parties and undermining Russian separatism in a non-violent manner.

A major difference from the contemporary era is that then-Russian President Boris Yeltsin did not support Crimea's separatists during the 1990s, something that cannot be said with certainty about still-influential former president and current Prime Minister Vladimir Putin today. One reason for this shift is that Ukraine possessed nuclear weapons until 1996, and could have halted its de-nuclearization if Russia had given its support to Crimean separatism at that point. Russia was also distracted by its own Chechen conflict in the mid-1990s. Russian politicians and a majority of the population of the Russian Federation have given support to territorial claims over Sevastopol or the Crimea. Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov described Sevastopol as “our city” because, from its foundation, it was always tied to the Russian empire and the USSR.³³ Seventy percent of Russians believe that relations with Ukraine could deteriorate over the issue of who controls the Crimea. Three-quarters of Russians also support the defense of Russians in the Crimea.³⁴

In the Putin era, the rise of nationalism as Russia's state ideology has brought previously marginal figures into the mainstream. For example, former extremist and neofascist ideologue of Eurasianism Alexander Dugin received a new position at the prestigious Moscow State University in April 2009, as a professor of sociology and head of a new Center for the Study of Conservatism. The most ardent supporter of Russian territorial

claims has been Moscow's mayor, Yuriy Luzhkov, who is a senior member of the Unified Russia Party and a senator in the Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian parliament. Although as president, and currently as prime minister, Putin has stated that Russia recognizes Ukraine's borders as agreed in the 1997 state treaty senior members of the Unified Russia party that Putin leads—such as Luzhkov—continue to pursue territorial claims against Ukraine. The SBU demanded by a court order that the Sevastopol branch of the Institute for CIS Countries be closed.³⁵ The Moscow headquarters of the Institute is headed by Konstantin Zatulin,³⁶ who, like Liberal Democratic Party leader and deputy speaker of the State Duma Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and Moscow mayor Luzhkov, has been banned from entering Ukraine. The SBU has also sought to ban local separatist organizations—although support for separatism has declined from its peak of 40-50 percent in the mid-1990s to 25 percent in 2008.³⁷ One such organization was the People's Front Sevastopol-Crimea-Russia party, which was banned on the grounds that it presented a threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity. Mikhail Brytsyn of the Slavic Party in Sevastopol said, "People don't want anything to do with Ukraine here. Sevastopol is where we can reconstruct the historical truth and rejoin the whole of Russia. If Moscow wants it will be able to do it because it has the tools here."³⁸ Two People's Front leaders were charged with crimes carrying penalties up to five years' imprisonment under the criminal code that relates to threats to Ukraine's territorial integrity. When the People's Front was established in August 2005, it brought together twelve pro-Russian organizations. In 2007, the Front began a campaign called "Ukraine without the Crimea." Funding for the Front remains mysterious, but it is widely believed to come from Russia. From 2006-08, the Moscow city council donated nearly \$20 million to Crimean projects, and it planned to spend \$10 million in 2009 to support the Russian diaspora. However, this figure excludes the much larger sum transferred to pro-Russian groups in Ukraine; the Rusky Mir (Russian World) government-funded foundation has awarded grants to pro-Russian organizations in the Crimea and other Ukrainian regions where separatist groups are active.³⁹ Ukraine expelled two Russian diplomats in August 2009 for activities "incompatible with their status"—that is, supporting subversion of Ukrainian territory through financial and the provision of other types of support to separatists and pro-Russian extremist groups.⁴⁰

The contemporary era is different from the Yeltsin era. Firstly, nationalism emerged as an important ideology in the Putin era in Russia. The nationalist environment has facilitated the rise of nationalist youth groups, such as Nashi (Ours) and the Eurasian Youth Movement. Such Russian nationalist youth groups have taken part in anti-NATO and anti-American rallies in the Crimea, alongside Black Sea Fleet personnel wearing civilian clothes.⁴¹

Russia and Ukraine have exchanged heated words over the Black Sea Fleet, which is based in Ukraine under a temporary agreement lasting until 2017 (even though the Ukrainian constitution bans the presence of foreign military bases). The Ukrainian side is insecure over two threats related to the Black Sea Fleet. The first is that the Black Sea Fleet will continue to be used in military interventions in the CIS, as it was in the August 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia. One element of this threat is that the Black Sea Fleet could intervene in a conflict in the Crimea. Changes to Russian legislation permitting military intervention abroad provides for "the ability for a direct military threat from the Black Sea Fleet."⁴² The second threat is that Russia will not withdraw its forces from the Crimea in 2017—just as it did not remove its forces from separatist enclaves in Moldova and Georgia.⁴³ Russia has refused Ukrainian requests to begin negotiations on a phased

withdrawal over the period leading up to the final withdrawal date of 2017, and Moscow claims that the port of Novorosiysk is too unsuitable to accommodate a relocated Black Sea Fleet (and has ignored the alternative suggestion of Sochi). The Russian president and foreign ministry officials regularly lobby for the Sevastopol base to become permanent, supporting pro-Russian leaders such as Viktor Yanukovich in the hope that he will be president in 2017; Yanukovich and the Party of Regions support an indefinite extension of the Russian base beyond that date.

After Putin was elected president in 2000, Russian intelligence activities against Ukraine and other CIS countries increased.⁴⁴ The SBU has publicly revealed that Ukrainian citizens were the target of recruitment by Russian intelligence, including for *dezynformatsiya* work.⁴⁵ Russian intelligence has returned to Soviet KGB tactics of *dezynformatsiya*—planting fabricated stories in foreign media outlets or provincial Ukrainian newspapers—that are then reprinted by Kyiv’s central media. For instance, Ukrainians have been recruited to appear on Russian television and in interviews broadcast from the Crimea and South Ossetia. In these interviews, they claim that they were mercenaries sent to fight for the Georgian side in the 2008 war with Russia. These views of Ukrainians fighting on the Georgian side were presented by Russian officials on August 24, 2009.⁴⁶ False interviews have also alleged that Crimean Tatars⁴⁷ have been trained by Islamic fundamentalists. The National Security and Defense Council reported that Russian intelligence is actively involved in planting stories in Ukraine’s mass media to discredit the Ukrainian leadership and that Russia supported pro-Russian groups with the purpose of pursuing the reintegration of Ukraine into Russia’s political orbit.

The presence of Russian passports gives Russia the potential possibility of invading a territory in “defense of its citizens,” an argument used by Russia to justify its 2008 invasion of Georgia.⁴⁸ Victor Yushchenko said, during a December 2008 visit to Lithuania, that Russia’s new plans for issuing “Russian cards” (equivalent to U.S. “green card” immigration cards) was disturbing.

The Putin regime’s control over the mass-media has provided an opportunity to mobilize the Russian population on anti-American, anti-Georgian, and anti-Ukrainian platforms, making Ukraine the third most disliked country in Russia.⁴⁹ As Ukrainian experts have pointed out repeatedly in the Ukrainian media, about 80 percent of the Ukrainian population has a positive view of Russia, whereas a declining number of Russians have positive views on Ukraine. In Russia, the media onslaught is state-directed. However, no state campaign against Russia is taking place in Ukraine, which has a free media environment. The front cover of the weekly *Glavred* magazine acknowledged the results of this disparity, declaring, “Beware Ukrainophobia!”⁵⁰ Analyzing Ukrainian and Russian polls, the head of the Center for Military-Political Research in Kyiv summarized the Ukrainian-Russian relationship with his headline: “We like them but they do not like us.”⁵¹ Russian and Ukrainian national interests diverge over Georgia, energy, the Black Sea Fleet, the Crimea, different attitudes toward Soviet history, NATO membership, and many other issues.

The Ukrainian media have debated whether or not Russia is preparing its population for conflict with Ukraine by undertaking a concerted ideological campaign against Yushchenko and the Orange Revolution in the state-controlled Russian media.⁵² After a recent opinion poll, the Russian Levada Center concluded that there was a deliberate campaign in Russia to turn the population against Ukraine. Polls show that only a small amount of Russian citizens have a positive attitude toward Ukraine, and relations between the two countries

are at their lowest level since the USSR collapsed. Such negative attitudes can be used to justify punishing military operations, such as that undertaken against Georgia in 2008.

Following the invasion of Georgia, the issue of the Crimea becoming Russia's next target was hotly debated in Western policymaking circles.⁵³ French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner warned that "We all know that Russian passports are distributed" in the Crimea, and the EU feared the Crimea becoming the next hotspot for Russia.⁵⁴ What could Ukraine do in the event of a conflict in the Crimea? In that event, how would the conflict be similar or different to the one that took place in South Ossetia?

Ukraine, Russia and the Crimea

Russian officials always deny that the country has territorial claims against Ukraine. In the Yeltsin era, there was a distinct difference between the territorial revanchist parliament and the executive who recognized Ukraine's borders in 2007—although even this took three years to accomplish under "pro-Russian" president Leonid Kuchma. In the post-Yeltsin era, the line dividing the executive from parliament has become far more blurred, as parliament has become a rubber stamp institution controlled by the president. In addition to the ideological campaign directed against Ukraine previously discussed, books are being published in Russia about possible future wars with Ukraine.⁵⁵ Still, Prime Minister Putin denied that Russia had any territorial claims on Ukraine and claimed that the border had been resolved in the 1997 treaty that had been automatically extended for another decade in 2008: "The Crimea is no kind of disputed territory. . . . Russia has long ago recognized the borders of contemporary Ukraine. We have in fact completed in total our negotiations on borders," Putin told German television.⁵⁶ Russia has continually refused to demarcate on the ground its land border with Ukraine and demanded that its water border (i.e. the Sea of Azov) have no demarcated territorial limits.

At the same time, during a speech he gave to the NATO-Russian Council in Bucharest in April 2008, Putin disparaged Ukraine as an artificial state set to disintegrate if it joined NATO.⁵⁷ Putin also told his NATO hosts that Ukraine was in reality a country that had received large parts of its territory from Russia, in effect stating that Ukraine had little moral right to control that territory. This view of Ukraine as delicate, disunited, and fragile is common in Russia, the latest incarnation of which is referring to Ukraine as a failed state. A special issue of Russian political technologist Gleb Pavlovsky's *Ruskyi Zhurnal* was devoted to the subject "Will Ukraine Lose its Sovereignty?"⁵⁸ Following the Georgian crisis, such views raise Ukrainian insecurity about possible Russian intentions. Ukraine's former ambassador to the United States Yuriy Shcherbak, has written a lengthy analysis of the campaign conducted by senior Russian officials. Shcherbak believes that the aim of this campaign is an "ideological-propaganda preparation of a future operation for the seizure of the territory of a sovereign state."⁵⁹ Russia has yet to come to terms with Ukrainian sovereignty and independence,⁶⁰ writes Ukrainian political analyst Ihor Zhdanov. Ukrainian insecurity would be only assuaged if the Russian political elite respected Ukrainian sovereignty, accepted that a shared history does not mean Ukraine and Russia are not different, and, finally, that Ukrainian and Russian national interests do not always coincide.⁶¹

A Russian blitzkrieg into the Crimea, in a manner similar to that undertaken by Russia into South Ossetia in August 2008, is unlikely to take place, as Ukraine controls the peninsula through its interior ministry, SBU, border troops, and military units. The Crimea has no land border with Russia, unlike South Ossetia, and Ukrainians and Russians living

in the Crimea do not have a history of antagonism, again unlike in the Georgian-Ossetian situation and particularly the Georgian-Abkhaz case. The Crimea includes a staunchly pro-Ukrainian group, the 15 percent Tatar population, which can be quickly mobilized and already holds a grievance—over their 1944 deportation—that makes them solidly anti-Russian.⁶² Tatars have many sympathies with the Chechens, who were also deported in 1944, so, in opening up the Crimean question, Russia could inadvertently reopen the Chechen question as well.

Nevertheless, small-scale clashes, provoked by Russian nationalists—with or without the support of Russian intelligence operatives—could lead to Ukraine's intervention that could then escalate. In June 2009, Ukraine gave Russia a December 2009 deadline to remove FSB officers stationed in the Black Sea Fleet because of increased concern that Russian intelligence is operating more broadly in the Crimea. The Center for Research into the Army, Conversion and Disarmament, a Ukrainian think-tank, believes that "Russia has created in the Crimea all the preconditions" for a military operation to take control of Sevastopol, detach the Crimea and destabilize the remainder of Ukraine. "For the achievement of these goals, Russia does not need a major military conflict with Ukraine, it is sufficient to destabilize the situation in a single Crimean region" through the use of targeted operations, "using the forces of the Russian special services and particular units of the Black Sea Fleet." Provocations could be organized to inflame relations between Crimean and Ukrainian law enforcement units, resulting in clashes that would lead to intervention by Russian Black Sea Fleet forces in defense of Russian citizens. Distributing Russian passports to Ukrainian citizens, which the SBU and Yushchenko have accused Russia of doing, is illegal, as Ukraine does not recognize dual citizenship. In South Ossetia, the local population's possession of Russian passports gave Russia a pretext to intervene in their defense citing moral justification from analogous U.S. interventions in defense of its citizens in Grenada and elsewhere.

The threat of a conflict in the Crimea would become especially acute in the event of Ukraine moving into a NATO MAP, or if Russia opted to not withdraw the Black Sea Fleet in 2017 (possibly in response to the former). Russia could declare its sovereignty over Sevastopol, and Ukraine's intervention to retake Sevastopol could be thwarted by large pro-Russian crowds, making it difficult for Ukraine to reverse such an operation.⁶³ If Ukrainian security forces intervened in Sevastopol or another Crimean city, "The ensuing bloodshed would provide Moscow the excuse of intervening to protect compatriots—this time, unlike in South Ossetia, ethnic Russians."⁶⁴ Russia's change in legislation to permit military intervention abroad was seen as ominous by Ukrainian commentators and security experts, potentially giving Russia legal justification for intervention in the Crimea and the port of Sevastopol.

Ukraine has cooperated extensively with NATO's Partnership for Peace since 1994 and individually with NATO countries. Western support for the Ukrainian military was the subject of a November 2008 meeting between NATO and Ukraine held in Tallinn, Estonia. Following the Russia-Georgia war, Yushchenko called on the government to increase its military spending for 2009, and, in September 2008, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine reviewed the manner in which the resource-strapped armed forces are financed. Plans to increase the Ukrainian military's financing have been halted by the global financial crisis, which has necessitated the adoption of anticrisis measures as a condition for the receipt of an IMF US\$16.4 billion Stand-By Agreement.

In the aftermath of the Russia-Georgia conflict, Ukrainian Defense Minister Yuriy Yekhanurov announced plans to increase Ukraine's military presence in the Crimea and to deploy new units to Ukraine's border with Russia.⁶⁵ The Southern Operational Command (SOC), headquartered in Odesa, is geographically based on the former Soviet Southern Military District without Moldova that became independent in 1991 (excluding Moldova). Ukraine has large armed forces structures in the Crimea that fall under the division of the SOC, as the region was heavily militarized in the Soviet Union. The Sixth Army Corps is central to the SOC and includes one airborne, one airmobile, one armored, one artillery, and three mechanized brigades. The Crimea Tactical Group in Belbek is based around the 204th Fighter Aviation Brigade, operating MiG-29s for air defense and attack. Ukraine possesses a range of military forces in the Crimea that includes naval marines, air force, and antiaircraft missile complexes.⁶⁶

Elite Ukrainian National Guard units were stationed in the Crimea from 1991 to 1999, but in 2000 the National Guard was abolished and these units, which included some of the best-trained special forces (e.g., the Bars unit that guarded the presidential administration during the Orange Revolution and was mistakenly reported as a "Russian *spetsnaz* [special forces] unit") transferred to the Interior Ministry. These elite former National Guard units within the Interior Ministry are trained in mountain and amphibious tactics to deal with separatist unrest in the Crimea.

New military units are to be stationed along Ukraine's long land border with Russia. In the Soviet era, eastern Ukraine had no military district and a Northern Operational Command (NOC) headquartered in Chernihiv on the Russian border was created only in the mid-1990s. The Eighth Army Corps forms the basis of the NOC and includes one airmobile, one artillery, and three mechanized brigades, as well as a newly constituted Aviation Regiment for air defense. The Aviation Regiment was deployed in eastern Ukraine in 2007 and provides a defense umbrella over the economically important Donetsk.

The Russia-Georgia War and Domestic Ukrainian Politics

The Ukrainian parliaments that were elected in March 2006 and September 2007 were quite similar. Both groups included five political forces and the only change was that the Socialist Party was replaced by the centrist Volodymyr Lytvyn bloc in 2007. In the 2006-07 parliament, three Orange forces had won a parliamentary majority, but the Socialists' defection led to its collapse and thwarted Tymoshenko's return as prime minister leading to the creation of an alternative anticrisis coalition composed of the Party of Regions, Socialist and Communist Parties. The anticrisis coalition and the Yanukovich government opposed Ukraine's entry into a NATO MAP without a referendum; Yushchenko and his Orange allies argued for a referendum only at the end of a MAP, immediately before joining NATO. Ukraine's chances of entering a MAP at the November 2006 Riga summit of NATO were dashed. The Socialist Party is opposed to NATO membership, putting it at odds with most Socialist International members (Sweden's Social Democrats are one of the few leading members who also oppose NATO membership for their country).

In the 2007 elections, BYuT's increased support from 23 to 31 percent enabled an Orange Coalition with a slim parliamentary majority to be established without the Socialists, who failed to enter parliament. The "democratic" (i.e., Orange) coalition collapsed in September 2008 but was revived three months later when the Lytvyn bloc and Our Ukraine joined BYuT in a new coalition. BYuT and Our Ukraine are members of the center-right

European People's Party in the European Parliament, although Our Ukraine has a more distinctly conservative ideological profile.⁶⁷

The Georgian crisis added to the divisions that already existed within the Orange Coalition between Yushchenko's Our Ukraine and Tymoshenko's BYuT. The main fault line split Ukraine's parliament into two groups: the Orange Coalition and the Volodymyr Lytvyn bloc, both of whom—to different degrees—supported the Western stance and Georgian territorial integrity; the opposition Party of Regions and the Communist Party aligned themselves with Russia and recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Of the five parliamentary forces, only the Party of Regions was split on Georgia, expelling its former faction leader Raisa Bohatyriova, secretary of the National Security and Defense Council from December 2007, for her support of Georgia.⁶⁸ The Party of Regions's unsympathetic position on Georgia was contradictory and duplicitous, rather than “neutral,” as Dominique Arel claims.⁶⁹ The Party of Regions and the Communist Party both supported parliamentary resolutions in the Ukrainian and Crimean parliaments supporting South Ossetian and Abkhaz independence.

The opposition demanded an investigation into allegations of Ukraine supplying arms to Georgia. Russian and separatist leaders from South Ossetia and Abkhazia accused Ukraine of assisting in Georgia's alleged “ethnic cleansing” of South Ossetia and of supplying military equipment to Georgia. The Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs defended Ukraine by accusing Russia of having armed the separatists.⁷⁰ These accusations ignored the fact that “military-technical cooperation between Ukraine and Georgia, which has taken place over the last 15 years, took place within the parameters of international law.”⁷¹ Ukrainian supplies of military equipment began during Leonid Kuchma's presidency with then-Georgian president Eduard Shevardnadze, and continued during Yanukovich's 2002-04 administration.⁷² Georgia is not subject to an international arms embargo.

Yushchenko publicly joined the Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian presidents in standing on the same platform as Georgia's president in Tbilisi.⁷³ Ukraine's president and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which falls under his jurisdiction, had the sharpest reactions to the Russia-Georgia war within Ukraine, and Yushchenko maintained direct contact with Saakashvili on a daily basis throughout the crisis.⁷⁴ Yushchenko's position on Georgia was not endorsed by all Ukrainian political forces, and divisions in the Orange Coalition prevented the Ukrainian parliament from adopting a resolution condemning Russia's invasion and any resolution regarding the Russia-Georgia war. Nine drafts were submitted to parliament on September 2, 2008 regarding the war—four by Our Ukraine, one by BYuT, two by the Party of Regions, one by the Communists and one by the Lytvyn bloc—but each draft failed to obtain sufficient votes to be adopted.⁷⁵ The problem with adopting a resolution lay in the “competing rhetoric” in Kyiv that “underscores the difficulty Ukraine will face in formulating a coherent policy in the aftermath of the Russia-Georgia conflict.”⁷⁶ As senior BYuT deputy Mykola Tomenko pointed out, BYuT “does not have principled differences with Our Ukraine” that could have led to a unified resolution if both sides had sought to compromise.⁷⁷

Ukraine's reaction to the Georgian crisis fell victim to domestic politics. The Orange Coalition could have adopted a parliamentary resolution on September 2, 2008, but an already badly divided Orange Coalition following months of divisions and conflict (and prior to that three years of difficult relations) made efforts at compromise minimal. Two factors undermined a successful vote on the war resolution. First, a month before the war,

the presidential secretariat made unsubstantiated allegations against Tymoshenko, accusing her of “treason” in striking a deal with Putin for Russian support in the January 2010 presidential elections and claiming she was “plotting an assassination” against Viktor Baloga, head of the presidential secretariat.⁷⁸ With the onset of the war, the president’s response to the Georgian crisis was to declare war on Tymoshenko. Second, the internal divisions within the Orange Coalition that had been brewing all year ruled out drawing up a compromise resolution between four groups: the president, the prime minister, Our Ukraine, and BYuT.⁷⁹ Instead of a jointly prepared compromise document, BYuT and the government were ordered to rubber-stamp the already-prepared presidential positions and resolutions without being asked for their input.

The most radical stance on the Russia-Georgia war was adopted by Yushchenko and Our Ukraine.⁸⁰ Yushchenko has close personal and ideological ties to Saakashvili, and both he and his Our Ukraine remain ideologically within the western Ukrainian national democratic tradition, which has always been the most critically disposed toward Russian policies. Not surprisingly, their positions were staunchly anti-Russian. However, Yushchenko’s stance on Georgia was at odds with opinion polls that gave a high level of support for improving relations with Russia. Yushchenko suffered from low public support of 5 percent or less; a damning poll in the same month as the Russia-Georgia war showed 71.5 percent of Ukrainians did not trust him as commander-in-chief (22.5 percent said that they trusted him).⁸¹

BYuT supported Georgia’s territorial integrity and largely backed the EU’s mediation efforts and “peace plan.”⁸² Tymoshenko sent Deputy Prime Minister Hryhoriy Nemirya to Georgia after the conflict began, and Nemirya was the most active in ensuring Ukraine’s message came across to international media, including two appearances on the BBC’s prestigious program, *Hardtalk*.⁸³ The Tymoshenko government was the first to send humanitarian assistance to Georgia. Nemirya argued that “the government of Ukraine adopted a clear position from the outset, . . . the centerpiece of which was the recognition and support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.” The president, who is constitutionally in charge of foreign policy, took the lead and therefore the government “felt no need to repeat it.” Nemirya rejected accusations of the Ukrainian government being passive.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, there were subtle nuances in the manner in which BYuT approached the crisis compared to Yushchenko and Our Ukraine. BYuT’s positions were more closely in line with the European Union’s compromise position than with the more pro-Georgia U.S. and NATO position. BYuT and the prime minister refrained from using language that could be construed as anti-Russian. Two August 2008 presidential decrees were a case in point in contrasting Yushchenko’s ideological approach and Tymoshenko’s pragmatic approaches. The decrees (which led to a heated discussion within Ukraine) outlined measures demanding that Black Sea Fleet vessels give advance notice of their itineraries when departing from Sevastopol.⁸⁵ The Tymoshenko government believed these were overly provocative and Russia would likely respond by retaliating, which could threaten Ukraine’s territorial integrity. Russia refused to abide by the decrees, and it remained unclear why the president issued the decrees if the Ukrainian security forces were not going to enforce them. Tymoshenko accused Yushchenko of fanning nationalist flames and seeking to improve his popularity in western Ukraine in the run-up to the January 2010 presidential election. “Peace, quiet, and territorial unity are important values that the president has yet to come to terms with,” Tymoshenko quipped.⁸⁶

Tymoshenko's more pragmatic response to the crisis in Georgia factored into account various issues, including her government's responsibility for negotiating the 2009 gas contract with Russia in the following few months. It would be far-fetched to describe her pragmatic stance as "treason," as the presidential secretariat did.⁸⁷ Tymoshenko is "no Russian stooge," and her muted response, the *Economist* points out, "is motivated by a desire to guarantee Ukraine's territorial integrity—without inflaming relations with Russia."⁸⁸ Former president Leonid Kravchuk believed Ukraine should have limited itself to a "strongly worded" statement without issuing threats to the Black Sea Fleet.⁸⁹ Support for Tymoshenko's pragmatic stance was to be found within the then still-propresidential Our Ukraine faction in parliament. Deputy faction leader Taras Stetskiy regarded the ideological stance of the president as "not an act of principle but more likely immaturity" based on a lack of realistic analysis and anti-Russianism. According to Stetskiy, Ukraine's national interests do not need tension with Russia "but concrete steps in the direction of energy independence and NATO and first and foremost inclusion in the MAP in December."⁹⁰

The Party of Regions did not follow BYuT in condemning military action by both Russia and Georgia, instead adopting the Russian position of blaming the Georgians entirely. As to any Russian threat, "Ukraine today does not feel any threat (from Russia)," Party of Regions leader Yanukovich argued. The Party of Regions and the Communist Party supported a parliamentary resolution on September 2, 2008, to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, but the vote failed to pass when it was supported by only 167 deputies, including all 27 Communist deputies and 140 (out of 167) Party of Regions deputies.⁹¹ A September 17, 2008, vote by the Crimean parliament was more successful, and it recognized South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's independence with the support of 79 of 100 deputies.⁹² The Party of Regions is the largest faction in the Crimean parliament and allied to pan-Slavic parties in the For Yanukovich! Bloc and extreme leftist factions.

The Party of Regions position on the Georgian crisis was incoherent, contradictory, and out of touch with its own voters. The party's criticism of Ukrainian arms sales to Georgia conveniently ignored the fact that these had begun under Kuchma and continued during the 2002-04 Yanukovich administration. The party's support for separatism in Georgia would never be embraced by its core eastern and southern Ukrainian voters, who have traditionally supported Ukraine's territorial integrity. Yanukovich touted Russian arguments of "double standards" to explain why his party voted in such a manner, claiming that because the West had supported Kosovo's independence, the Party of Regions had supported the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. However, any comparison of Kosovo and Georgia fails to withstand any serious scrutiny. In Kosovo, the central Serbian government undertook ethnic cleansing against the Kosovar Albanian minority. In Abkhazia and South Ossetia, ethnic cleansing was undertaken by two national minorities against Georgians with the connivance of Russian "peacekeepers." Yanukovich's equivalence would only stand if Kosovar Albanians had ethnically cleansed Serbs with the connivance of UN and NATO peacekeepers.⁹³ The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs described Yanukovich's support of South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's independence as "harming the national interests of Ukraine" and as being "provocative," "irresponsible" and "unpleasant."⁹⁴ Similar strong words were used by Raisa Bohatyriova in Washington, DC, which led to her expulsion from the Party of Regions.

Kuchma would never have permitted political forces loyal to him—such as the Party of Regions—to have supported separatism, and it would have been inconceivable for

such a vote to have passed in the Crimean parliament during Kuchma's decade in office. The Party of Regions's support for South Ossetian and Abkhaz independence placed it in strange company; only two countries, Russia and Nicaragua, recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, together with the Palestinian Hamas movement and separatists in Moldova and Azerbaijan. No non-Russian CIS state, including the pro-Russian Belarus, supported the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization also failed to support the regions' independence, as China is decidedly sensitive on "splittism"—a reference to separatism in Tibet and Xingjian.

The Party of Regions faction blamed the authorities for not staying neutral, further accusing the government of dragging Ukraine into the conflict and the Yushchenko administration of supporting Georgia and unleashing a "massive anti-Russian propaganda campaign."⁹⁵ This ignored the state-directed anti-Ukrainian and anti-Georgian campaigns in the Russian state-controlled media that had led to a growth in Russians seeing Ukraine in a negative manner. The Party of Regions faction demanded better relations with Russia, constitutional changes to transform Ukraine into a nonbloc (neutral) country, and a referendum on NATO membership, as well as the creation of a temporary parliamentary commission to investigate the delivery of weapons to Georgia and Ukrainian participation in support of Georgia, echoing Russia's claims of Ukraine's alleged involvement in the conflict.⁹⁶ Parliament failed to create a commission as the Party of Regions', the Lytvyn bloc's, and Communist Party's representation (217 deputies) was too small to carry the vote. (BYuT and Our Ukraine voted against the motion.)⁹⁷ Ukraine had twenty-one military trainers in Georgia, but these soldiers did not participate in the conflict and returned to Ukraine on the president's plane.⁹⁸ Party of Regions deputy Valeriy Konovaliuk was accused by the SBU of leaking state secrets about Ukraine's arms exports after he led a campaign accusing Yushchenko of illegally supplying weapons to Georgia. The SBU intervened to prevent the screening of a documentary that was made with the support of the Russian Embassy at the Hyatt Hotel in Kyiv. The Party of Regions' domestic campaign echoed the external Russian propaganda campaign, claiming that Ukraine had supplied large volumes of weapons to Georgia and that Ukrainian mercenaries had fought on the Georgian side. A Russian Foreign Ministry statement claimed that "by supplying heavy military hardware to the Georgian army the Ukrainian side partially bears the responsibility for the bloodshed."⁹⁹

The Party of Regions split over the Russia-Georgia conflict, exposing long-simmering divisions within the party, between its anti-Orange ideological wing, headed by Yanukovich, to which many former Communist Party voters had defected, and its pragmatic wing dominated by big business, with which oligarchs are aligned.¹⁰⁰ The thirty-five Party of Regions "dissidents" in the Ukrainian parliament did not vote for the September 2, 2008 resolution recognizing South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's independence. This group included defectors from the Orange camp, such as Taras Chornovil and Serhiy Holovatiy, as well as members of its "pragmatic" business wing. Bohatyriova, a former Party of Regions parliamentary faction leader, and the secretary of the National Security and Defense Council since December 2007, is a member of the Party of Regions' pragmatic wing; during an August 29, 2008, visit to Washington, D.C., she expressed her support for Yushchenko's position in support of Georgian territorial integrity, while condemning Yanukovich's backing of Georgian separatism. Bohatiorova added that Ukrainian politicians "frequently use foreign challenges for their party and electoral plans despite the risks of a threat to national security," an oblique reference to Yanukovich and his stance on NATO.¹⁰¹ Bohatyriova

was expelled from the party on September 1, 2008, a day before parliament's vote on the Georgia resolution.¹⁰² Leonid Grach, the Crimean Communist Party leader, criticized the Party of Regions for its lack of a consolidated position on Georgia.¹⁰³

Conclusion

Russia has never reconciled itself to Ukrainian sovereignty of Sevastopol and the Crimea, whereas Ukrainian insecurity over Russian policies toward the latter's neighbors has heightened following the Russia-Georgia war and Russia's recognition of two separatist enclaves in Georgia. A war between two armies—similar to what took place in Georgia in August 2008—is unlikely in the Crimea; nevertheless, small-scale conflicts between Russian nationalist groups and Ukrainian law enforcement could escalate and lead to Russian intervention, particularly from the Black Sea Fleet, which remains based in Sevastopol until 2017, in defense of “Russian citizens.” Russia's revised legislation providing its military with legal right to intervene abroad is seen as a direct threat to Ukraine's sovereignty over the Crimea, the only region of the country with a Russian ethnic majority. Ukraine's muddled, ineffective and disunited reaction to the war was an outcome of years of political instability, crises and infighting in the Orange camp. A compromise Orange position could have been found if the coalition was not already on the verge of disintegration. The Russia-Georgia war highlighted divisions within the Party of Regions over its contradictory stance in defense of Ukrainian territorial integrity and support for separatism in Georgia.

NOTES

1. “Dear Viktor, you're dead, love Dmitry,” *Economist*, August 20, 2009. See also Volodymyr Horbulin and Oleksandr Lytvynenko, “Velykyi susid vyznachyvsia. Shcho Ukrayini robyty dali?,” *Zerkalo Nedeli/Tyzhnia*, September 19-25, 2009; Borys Tarasiuk, “Isteryka Kremlia svidchyt pro yoho besyllia ytrymuvaty u sboiy ‘orbiti’ Ukrainu,” <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, August 13, 2009; and Vadym Karasiov, “Blog yomu suddia. Do medvedevskykh blogotez,” <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, August 14, 2009.

2. See Taras Kuzio, “Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy Since the Orange Revolution,” *International Spectator* 41, no. 4 (2006): 1-18.

3. In 2007, Yushchenko's election bloc was named Our Ukraine-Peoples Self Defense. I have used the shorter and well-known Our Ukraine form in this article, which was the name of Yushchenko's bloc in the 2002 and 2006 elections.

4. The democratic coalition revived in early December 2008 with Our Ukraine, BYuT and the Volodymyr Lytvyn bloc.

5. “After the war,” *Economist*, October 16, 2008.

6. See Taras Kuzio, “Ukraine Beefs Up Its Military Defenses with an Eye on Russia,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 5, no. 232 (2008).

7. Volodymyr Horbulin and Valentyn Badrak, “Konkvistador u Pansyri Zaliznim,” *Zerkalo Nedeli/Tyzhnia*, September 12-18, 2009. See also Taras Kuzio, “Ukraine Debates the Russian Threat,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 6, no. 171 (September 18, 2009) and Vladimir Socor, “Time to De-Mothball the Budapest Memorandum for Ukraine,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 6, no. 174 (September 23, 2009).

8. *Gazeta po-Kyivski*, August 13, 2008.

9. See David Blair, “Georgia: Vladimir Putin Sends Emphatic Message of Global Importance,” *Daily Telegraph*, August 12, 2008; and Andrew Wilson, “After Georgia: Is Ukraine Next?” *EU Observer*, September 5, 2008.

10. “Ukraine Comes to the Forefront,” *Economist*, September 11, 2008.

11. “Ukraine Strategy,” *Financial Times*, August 27, 2008.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

14. David Miliband, "Ukraine, Russia and European stability," *Guardian*, August 29, 2008.
15. Editorial, *Kyiv Post*, August 27, 2008. See also Taras Kuzio, "Is Ukraine Part of Europe's Future," *Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (2006): 89-108. Andrew Wilson and Nicu Popescu argue against the EU's passive strategy in its eastern neighborhood, which, they believe, will have dire consequences for both the region and the EU's relationship with Russia. See Wilson and Popescu, *The Limits of Enlargement-Lite: European and Russian Power in the Troubled Neighbourhood* (London, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2009), http://ecfr.3cdn.net/dc71693a5ae835b482_50m6bvdkn.pdf (accessed July 14, 2009).
16. Interview with Robert Hunter, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, August 28, 2008.
17. See Nicu Popescu, Mark Leonard, and Andrew Wilson, "Can the EU Win the Peace in Georgia?" (policy brief, European Council on Foreign Relations, London, England, August 25, 2008), <http://ecfr.eu/page/-/documents/ECFR-Georgia-Policy-Brief.pdf> (accessed July 14, 2009).
18. The figures can be found in Pierre Noel, "How Dependent Is Europe on Russian Gas?" EU Energy Policy Blog, November 18, 2009, <http://www.energypolicyblog.com/?p=293> (accessed July 14, 2009). See also Erin Carriere-Kretschmer and Katie Holzwart, "European Worries about Reliance on Russian Energy Were Already High," Pew Research Center Publications, January 15, 2009, <http://pewresearch.org> (accessed 10 April 2009).
19. Interview with Oleh Rybachuk, *UNIAN*, October 17, 2008.
20. See Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine's Orange Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
21. Interview with Yuri Yekhanurov, <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, October 3, 2008.
22. Yevhen Marchuk, Steven Pifer, and Viktor Yushchenko, quoted in "Ukraine's Security Vacuum," *Ukraine Analyst* 1, no. 3 (2008), pp.1-3.
23. See Taras Kuzio, "Reflections on NATO—Will Ukraine and Georgia Ever Join This Alliance?" *Kyiv Post*, April 18, 2007; and "Georgia Outshines Ukraine at Recent NATO summit in Riga," *Kyiv Post*, December 22, 2006.
24. See Charles H. Fairbanks, "Georgia's Rose Revolution," *Journal of Democracy* 15, no. 2 (2004): 110-24; Taras Kuzio, "Kuchma to Yushchenko: Ukraine's 2004 Elections and 'Orange Revolution,'" *Problems of Post-Communism* 52, no. 2 (2005): 29-44; and Lucan A. Way, "Kuchma's Failed Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 2 (2005): 131-45.
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28. <http://www.nuns.com.ua/>, August 8, 2008.
29. On these issues, see Taras Kuzio, "Russia's Ideological Crusade Against Ukraine," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, June 12, 2009; Kuzio, "The Ukrainian-Russian Cultural Conflict," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, May 6, 2009; and Kuzio, "Russian Dezyinformatsia Campaign against the Orange Coalition," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, December 16, 2008.
30. See Taras Kuzio, "Ukrainian-Russian Diplomatic War Intensifies," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 6, no. 158 (August 17, 2009); "SBU stirs domestic and international tension," *Jane's Intelligence Weekly* (July 29, 2009); "Ukraine Tightens the Screw in Sevastopol," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 6, no. 141 (July 23, 2009); and "SBU Challenges the FSB in Crimea," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 6, no. 134 (July 14, 2009).
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32. See "Ukraine/Russia: Why Crimea differs from South Ossetia," *Oxford Analytica*, August 29, 2008.
33. Sergei Ivanov, quoted in *Ukrainska Pravda*, June 14, 2008, <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>. See also Pavel K.Baev, "Russia Insists on Treating Sevastopol as an Open Question," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, June 16, 2008.

34. Russian poll cited in <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, February 18, 2009.
35. See Taras Kuzio, "Russian Intelligence Seeks to Destabilize the Crimea," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, October 1, 2008; and "Russian Passports as Moscow's Geopolitical Tool," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, September 15, 2008.
36. On Ukraine's June 2009 official refusal to admit Konstantin Zatulin to the Crimea, see Taras Kuzio, "Russia's Ideological Crusade Against Ukraine," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, June 12, 2009.
37. Figures cited by Deputy Mayor of Sevastopol Vladimir Kozarin in Owen Matthews, "A Respectable Russia," *Newsweek*, August 23, 2008.
38. Damien McElroy, "Russia Stokes Pro-Kremlin Feeling in Ukraine," *Daily Telegraph*, August 23, 2008.
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41. This information was provided to the author during his December 2008 and May 2009 field research in Ukraine by parliamentary deputies and think-tank analysts.
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43. See "Russia Drags Feet over Black Sea Fleet," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 2009.
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46. "Russia: Ukrainian soldiers fought for Georgia," Associated Press, August 24, 2009.
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48. See Taras Kuzio, "Russian Passports as Moscow's Geopolitical Tool," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, September 15, 2008.
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50. Serhiy Solodkyi, "Oberezhno, ukrayinophobia!," *Glavred*, May 20, 2009.
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52. See Taras Kuzio, "Russia's Ideological Crusade Against Ukraine," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 6, no. 113 (June 12, 2009).
53. Leon Aron, "Russia's Next Target Could be Ukraine," *Wall Street Journal*, September 10, 2008.
54. Sabina Zawadzki, "Business in Ukraine Eyeing Russia But Confident," Reuters, August 28, 2008.
55. Some of these were reviewed as "U Rosii prodayut knyhy pro viynu z Ukrayinoiu," <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, March 2, 2009; and Taras Kuzio, "Russia Sees Ukraine as a Failed State," *Ukraine Analyst* 1, no. 16 (2009).
56. Vladimir Putin, interviewed on ARD television channel, Germany, August 30, 2008.
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58. Special issue of *Ruskyi Zhurnal*, March 16, 2009. The journal is available at <http://www.russ.ru/>. (accessed March 20, 2009).
59. Yuriy Shcherbak, "Ukrayina yak failed state: mify ta realnist," *Den*, May 21, 2009.
60. See also Anatolii Vasserman, "Rossiy pora kupyty Ukrayinu," *Komsomolskaya Pravda v Ukrayine*, June 11, 2009.
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62. See Taras Kuzio, "Crimean Tatars Divide Ukraine and Russia," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, June 24, 2009.

63. Leon Aron, "The Georgia Watershed," *Russian Outlook*, Fall 2008.
64. Ibid.
65. See Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine Beefs Up Its Military Defenses with an Eye on Russia," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, December 5, 2008.
66. This detailed military information is taken from Sentinel Country Risk Assessments, "Global Political and Security Risk Analysis," *Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments*, <http://sentinel.janes.com/public/sentinel/index.shtml> (accessed July 14, 2009)
67. For a good overview see Paul D'Anieri, *Understanding Ukrainian Politics: Power, Politics, and Institutional Design* (Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe, 2007).
68. See Taras Kuzio, "Party of Regions Splits Over Georgia and NATO," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, September 2, 2008.
69. Dominique Arel, "Ukraine Since the War in Georgia," *Survival* 50, no. 6 (2009): 18.
70. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, August 9-10, 2008.
71. Volodymyr Kim, "Kavkazki kanonady," *Zerkalo Nedeli/Tyzhnia*, August 9-15, 2008.
72. See Taras Kuzio, "Is Ukraine Arming Georgia Against Russia?" *RFE/RL Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine Report*, October 29, 2002.
73. See Taras Kuzio, "Ukrainian Government Expresses Strong Support for Georgia," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, August 12, 2008.
74. President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko's web site, <http://www.president.gov.ua/>, August 9, 2008.
75. <http://www.rada.kyiv.ua/>, September 2, 2008.
76. "CIS: Conflict bolsters Moscow's regional influence," *Oxford Analytica*, August 18, 2008.
77. *UNIAN*, October 2, 2008.
78. The SBU is not currently undertaking any criminal investigation of Tymoshenko, SBU chairman Valentyn Nalyvaychenko told parliament, in <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, March 17, 2009. In August 2008, the SBU had studied materials provided by the presidential secretariat on Tymoshenko's alleged "treason" and requested the external intelligence service to provide facts, as required by legislation, but no evidence of this "treason" was provided. This SBU statement followed that of the prosecutor-general, who returned the secretariat's hundreds of pages of documents alleging "treason" in the same month the charges were made—August 2008, the same month as the Russia-Georgia war. The prosecutor-general's office found nothing that could be used to open a criminal investigation against Tymoshenko.
79. The president's and presidential secretariat's criticism of BYuT's position can be found at <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>; August 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, and <http://www.nuns.com.ua/>, August 14, 18, 2008. See also Yulia Mostova, "Chornyi kvadrat," *Zerkalo Nedeli/Tyzhnia*, August 23, 2008.
80. Speech by President Yushchenko in Tbilisi on the President of Ukraine's Viktor Yushchenko web site, <http://www.president.gov.ua/>, August 12, 2008 For the Our Ukraine statement, see <http://www.nuns.com.ua/>, August 13, 2009. See also Jed Sunden, "Strong Leadership by President Yushchenko," *Kyiv Post*, August 21, 2008; and Viktor Yushchenko, "Georgia and the Stakes for Ukraine," *Washington Post*, August 25, 2008.
81. The poll is taken from "Ukrayintsi ne doviryayut Yushchenku yak verkhovnomu holovno-komanduvachu," *Zerkalo Nedeli/Tyzhnia*, August 23-29, 2008.
82. Tymoshenko's and BYuT's statements and commentaries can be found at <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, August 12, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 26, and September 17, 26, 2008. The BYuT statement was published in the Yulia Tymoshenko bloc web site, <http://www.byut.com.ua/>, September 2, 2008. See also Ivan Grach, "Shepot Tymoshenko o Gruzii," <http://www.glavred.info/>, August 14, 2008; and Vasyl Stoyakin, "Tymoshenko, Ossetia I 'vybory-2010,'" <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, August 21, 2008.
83. Nemyria's comments can be found at <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, August 21 and September 10, 2008. His BBC Hardtalk interview can be viewed at BBC News, "Hryhorii Nemyria," September 17, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/hardtalk/7620824.stm> (accessed July 14, 2009).
84. n.a., "BYuT Dismisses Hysterical Statement," *Inform*, August 26, 2008. See also "Nemyria: A Voice to the World," *Inform*, September 2, 2008 available at <http://www.ibyut.com/>.

85. See commentaries by Yushchenko, Tymoshenko, the presidential secretariat, and political parties in the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko's web site, <http://www.president.gov.ua/>, August 12, 2008; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, August 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 25, 26, 28; and <http://www.nuns.com.ua/>, August 12, 13, 2008. The decrees were published on the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko's web site, <http://www.president.gov.ua/>, August 13, 2008. See also Viktor Chyvokun, "Chornomorskyi Flot zahnav Tymoshenko u kut," <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, August 28, 2008.

86. Tymoshenko quoted by <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, September 8, 2008.

87. See Yulia Tymoshenko, "Containing Russia," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 3 (2007): 69-82.

88. "Ukraine Comes to the Forefront," *Economist*, September 11, 2008.

89. Jan Maksymiuk, "Is Ukraine Prepared to Maintain Its Tough Stance Against Russia?" *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, August 15, 2008.

90. Taras Stetskiv, "Navchytysia pravylno stavytysia do Rosii," <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, October 7, 2008.

91. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev announced Russia's intention to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia on August 26, 2008. The day before, the Federation Council and State Duma of the Russian parliament unanimously voted to recognize South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's independence by 130-0 and 447-0, respectively.

92. The vote and ensuing commentary by the Party of Regions can be found in <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, August 19, 22, 24; September 17; and November 20, 2008.

93. See the Party of Regions web site, <http://www.partyofregions.org.ua/>, August 26, 2008.

94. See the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine web site, <http://www.mfa.gov.ua/>, August 29, 2008.

95. See the Ukrainian parliamentary web site, <http://www.rada.kyiv.ua/>, August 26, 2008.

96. See the Party of Regions web site at <http://www.partyofregions.org.ua/>, August 26, 2009.

97. The vote was supported by 172 Party of Regions deputies, 27 Communist deputies, 17 Lytvyn bloc deputies, and 1 BYuT deputy. The vote is available on the Ukrainian parliamentary web site, <http://www.rda.kyiv.ua/>.

98. Interview with Defense Minister Yuri Yekhanurov on <http://www.pravda.com.ua/>, October 3, 2008.

99. See the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation web site, <http://www.mid.ru/>, September 11, 2008.

100. See Rosaria Puglisi, "The Rise of the Ukrainian Oligarchs," *Democratization* 10, no. 3 (2003): 99-123.

101. Ukrainian News Agency, August 31, 2008.

102. I asked Bohatyriova if she supported Yushchenko's backing of Georgia's territorial integrity or Yanukovich's support for the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia at an August 29, 2008, luncheon organized by the U.S.-Ukraine Business Council in Washington, DC, where Bohatyriova was the guest speaker. Her honest reply in support of Yushchenko's position and criticism of Yanukovich was the cause of her expulsion from the Party of Regions three days later.

103. Ukrainian News Agency, September 1, 2008.

APPENDIX
Summary of Ukrainian Party Positions on Georgia

Issue	President Viktor Yushchenko and Our Ukraine	Prime minister and the Bloc Yulia Tymoshenko	Viktor Yanukovich and the Party of Regions
Georgian territorial integrity	Support	Support	Supported the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in the Ukrainian and Crimean parliaments
Military aggressor	Russian invasion of Georgia; no criticisms of Georgian military action	Russia and Georgia both used excessive force	Georgia attacked South Ossetian peaceful citizens; refusal to condemn Russia
Black Sea fleet	Provide advance details of movement; Vessels could be prevented from returning to Sevastopol	Support in principle, but the two decrees are impossible to implement if Russia refuses to abide by them	“Anti-Russian” position; ignoring of use of fleet vessels in Georgian conflict
Support for European Union (EU) “peace plan”	Half-hearted	Support	No comment
What should Ukraine do next?	Ukraine should accelerate its drive to join North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)	NATO membership is a goal but will only become realistic when popular support for it increases; Ukraine should strive for EU integration and join the European Security and Defence Policy	Priority should be good relations with Russia; Ukraine should become a non-bloc (neutral) state and not join NATO