

UKRAINE-RUSSIA: WAYS OF OVERCOMING CRISIS IN RELATIONS*

UKRAINE-RUSSIA RELATIONS SHOULD BE CLEAR, PRAGMATIC, EFFECTIVE AND POSITIVELY COMPETITIVE



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Our goal today is to have an open discussion, maybe hot, because if we speak about real things, nothing should be concealed, one should be frank and responsible – this is the main way not only to dialogue but to passage of adequate decisions.

To predict the future, one should look into the past. The first observation: over 17 years of independence of our two countries we have not had a single systemic project, we have done nothing together. This is the first and the main conclusion, now absolutely undisputable. Regretfully, apart from some local projects that did not have nationwide, geopolitical and geo-strategic significance, we have done nothing.

Meanwhile, there are lots of various joint bodies and institutes. For instance, the CIS. Here, I can only back the idea pronounced in 2005 by then Russian President V.Putin that the CIS had played out. We still believe that if we manage to employ that mechanism for bilateral economic relations, it can live and work effectively.

Noteworthy, the economic strategy of the CIS development proposed by Ukraine two years ago envisages development of the Commonwealth in its economic dimension. We [Ukraine and Russia], however, only pretend to be willing to make the first step, to reformat the agenda, while nobody proposes how to do that.

And when we have no common ideology, no common and clear approach and understanding of problems, there appears vacuum, as you know, always filled with something. In this case, we filled that vacuum with all kind of political rubbish, controversial things over 17 years. In the result of such policy, anti-Ukrainian spirits arose in Russia for the first time. This is the basic problem. There may be tension between leaders, but tension between peoples is the fact that cannot be overlooked.

There were and there are mistakes in the foreign political course of both Ukraine and Russia. I will start with Ukraine. I well remember the year of 2007, when Yu.Tymoshenko published in the "Foreign Affairs" magazine the article "Containing Russia". Why did I recall that article? Because the ideology in Ukraine was confined to the following formula: "to have good relations with the West, we should have tense relations with Russia". But this cannot be the case, such ideology leads nowhere.

I have no doubt that Ukraine will achieve its goal and become an EU member. However, that goal is far away, we still have to come to it. And to become an equal member of that community, we should realise that we must have normal relations, not relations of deterrence, with our huge neighbour – Russia.

Generally speaking, the Russian factor is very sternly used in Ukraine. I cannot but mention, for instance, V.Yanukovich, who actually pursued a policy of either introduction of dual citizenship, or granting an official status to the Russian language. It was absolutely clear that neither would ever be implemented, this cannot be done in Ukraine, nobody will do that. Gross

* On May 29, 2009, Razumkov Centre jointly with the Russian Public Policy Centre Foundation supported by Arseniy Yatseniuk's "Open Ukraine" Foundation held in Kyiv the Round-table "Ukraine-Russia: ways of overcoming crisis in relations". The discussion involved MPs, representatives of executive bodies, business structures, heads of leading state and non-governmental organisations of the two countries, journalists. This magazine carries some presentations by Ukrainian and Russian representatives.

miscalculations in the policy of today's President caused similar miscalculations in the policy of the Russian leadership.

We have a very nice slogan: "Our relations should be fraternal". But I do not quite understand what it means from the viewpoint of the international law. That is, we are again engaged in substitution of notions. I believe that our relations should be clear, pragmatic, effective and more than that – positively competitive. Exactly there lie prospects of our development.

There is the so-called "old" agenda between Ukraine and Russia. The first thing I guess we should start with is the total change of that agenda. I already touched upon some of its items. There are others, too, for instance, the Black Sea Fleet, used both in Ukraine and in Russia as an element of destabilisation.

We should absolutely clearly answer this question: there is a temporary agreement of stationing of the Russian Fleet. Ukraine is a European state, and nobody is going to revise the treaty with Russia concerning the Fleet. The Ukrainian Constitution expressly bans foreign military bases on the territory of Ukraine. Everything temporary once comes to an end.

We should take care of our own Fleet, not Russian, should update the balance of forces in the Black Sea, begin our own rearmament and, of course, respect international treaties.

The agenda also includes security issues, the NATO issue, the subject of the Russian language, problems of humanitarian cooperation. To our great disappointment, those subjects are too ideological and politicised, and we should frankly admit – we must change the agenda and move to thoroughly planned relations, relations leading to practical results.

We should stop such speculations on the Russian side, too. I realise that they were partially in response to our policy. For instance, it was quite popular in Russia to say that the "Big Treaty" should be terminated. We with Russia's Foreign Minister S.Lavrov, on the contrary, signed a bilateral protocol elaborating the "Big Treaty".

Another vital problem that arose in our bilateral relations starting from 2006 – contacts in the gas sector. Our response should be clear: "Gas is not geopolitics, gas is business". As soon as gas or any other raw material begins to be used for geopolitical goals, both the party that began the process and that party at which it was aimed are losing.

I guess that in the gas issue, we should return to the idea of multilateral cooperation, I stress – multilateral. Ukraine is interested in sources of gas on the Russian territory. Russia is interested in transit. Ukraine and Russia are interested in European consumers, and Europe is interested in guarantees of security of supply. This is business, the subject vital for our bilateral relations, but I stress – not as a tool of geopolitical influence but as a tool of economic development.

Ukraine should mature as a nation, Russia should mature as a nation, and we should set right goals for ourselves. I see a number of goals for Ukraine, whose attainment may even be a subject of cooperation with our Russian partners. Ukraine should promptly achieve the following goals.

The *first* for Ukraine – a strong government, a strong army, the ability to guarantee systemic security of the country.

Second – both for Ukraine and Russia – another industrialisation and modernisation of industry. We have no right to repeat the crisis of 2008-2009, when money is printed not backed with anything, in absence of added value, in absence of real product. That is why we should enter a new industrialisation age.

Third – a highly productive, industrialised and well-organised agriculture. By the way, this morning, I heard a Russian Foreign Ministry report saying that Ukraine, Russia and Kazakhstan can "keep" 25% of the world food market. So, joint projects in agriculture are very important for Ukraine.

And *fourth* – reproduction of educated and healthy population.

We indeed share a common history with Russia, consequently, we and Russia have many common goals and very many common objectives.

I believe that today's Round-table is the first small step for us to begin the process of drawing up a new agenda for Ukraine, for Russia and for our bilateral relations ■

STRENGTHEN POTENTIAL OF BILATERAL COOPERATION



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*First Deputy
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Extraordinary and
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Conduct of a Ukrainian-Russian Round-table is high on the agenda now. It is highly expedient to involve in the dialogue not only representatives of governmental structures but those who on the expert level, on the level of serious conceptual approaches are trying to find solution of the most complex problems hindering our progress. I would like to particularly dwell upon the positive potential the two countries retain and, I am positive, will be able to employ in the near future.



But before that: what hinders progress most of all? I guess that the greatest threat to bilateral relations is posed by high-level rhetoric, translated to rank-and-file citizens by mass media. They absorb it and generate their own approach, own idea not only of interstate relations but, if you please, of relations between peoples. What is alarming is that according to the “Levada Centre” polls, almost 60% of Russians negatively treat Ukraine – not the Ukrainian leadership but Ukraine in general (at least, such was the wording of the question).

Millions of Ukrainian citizens who every year go to Russia, meet their relatives, feel such negative treatment. I believe that the state structures and mass media should put an end to that. It is no secret that in Russia, information on many key subjects, especially on TV, is presented in rather a uniform manner. The approach to coverage should be changed, to make it more balanced.

We should solve this problem, including through round-table discussions, like this one, since the people sitting here influence the public opinion in their countries.

The second problem seriously hindering our progress – mythologisation of many historic and current subjects: NATO, Mazepa, period of World War II. In reality, those subjects should be left for historians. Such discussion – tough enough – is now underway in Ukraine. Different opinions are expressed, the whole range of approaches and assessments is present. Additional “inputs” from the Russian side change little, and if they do – only for the worse. We should remove politicisation of the entire discussion. This could at least substantially improve the atmosphere of relations between the countries.

Now, what unites us. The crisis has shown that despite its colossal resources, Russia probably cannot effectively implement the key programmes adopted by the leadership (in nanotechnologies, innovative development and many other sectors) without Ukrainian enterprises and research centres. At least, not in all sectors. And in such case, the end product will cost much more than in case of involvement of Ukrainian partners.

Before the crisis, the volume of our trade was steadily growing. Economy is the platform where we should naturally work together and together solve various problems. It would be naive to believe that in the modern world, money alone can do everything. Manpower, trained engineering personnel are needed. For instance, a Ukrainian businessman is beginning to operate a shipyard in Petrozavodsk. He brought some specialists from Kerch but faced deficit of engineering personnel. Nevertheless, his efforts are supported by both local and federal Russian authorities. I guess, we, too, should provide similar preferential conditions for those who can really move forward the Ukrainian economy, coming from Russia.

Ukraine and Russia have created a perfect tool for solution of inter-governmental, interstate problems – the Ukrainian-Russian Interstate Commission. Last year, we arranged meetings of actually all its structural

units. The Committee for Economic Cooperation held a meeting, agreements were reached enabling implementation of very serious short-term projects.

It is very difficult, however, to re-establish dialogue on the top state level. Heads of two neighbour states should meet not so rarely. Those contacts should not be conditioned by some ideological preferences.

Whether you like what your neighbour says or not, a good discussion is better than silence and throwing maxims over the fence.

After all, it is important that Ukraine and Russia, the Ukrainian and Russian peoples retain the feeling of community of interests – making the basis for mutual understanding. ■

EMPHASIS SHOULD BE MADE ON GAINS IN BILATERAL RELATIONS



Vsevolod LOSKUTOV,
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We speak about the need of search of gains in Russia-Ukraine relations. Such gains exist, and examples are many. We have large-scale joint projects. Our discussion already referred to the “Big Treaty”, in 1990s considered one of the best in the European practice of legal treaties. By the way, the document was initialled by Ye.Marchuk, present here. It is a major project envisaging expansion of the entire basis of our bilateral relations. Unfortunately, it is not fully implemented, as proved by recent analysis.

I wish to note the importance of bilateral contacts on the level of experts, scholars professionally dealing with Russia-Ukraine relations – they are now present at this Round-table on both sides. Evidently, long-term fruitful partnership between two major centres of political science of Russia and Ukraine – Razumkov Centre and the Russian Public Policy Centre Foundation – gives an example of such positive cooperation. Meetings, round-tables, conferences are regularly held, the Russian-Ukrainian Consultative Council has been set up.

In my opinion, it is very important that A.Yatseniuk’s “Open Ukraine” Foundation, too, joined this cooperation. In due time, when A.Yatseniuk was leading Ukraine’s Foreign Ministry, we had many interesting meetings, prepared many interesting decisions which I consider topical even now.

The gains in our relations, of course, include contacts among citizens of both countries. We often meet people



coming to Ukraine, people visiting Russia. In general, their reaction is good and positive. According to the border services, approximately 20 million of Russian and Ukrainian citizens annually cross our border.

Those people are the bearers of our relations, they take hard the difficulties, the sometimes harsh rhetoric of the interstate dialogue mentioned today. I guess, this should be taken into account when building negotiations between Ukraine and Russia. I would like to further mention the important and interesting decisions passed recently. For instance, we had a hard dialogue with the National Council for Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine.

I also took part in those negotiations and want to announce the news that should make happy both the Russian side and, I hope, the Ukrainian public. The First Channel World Network CJSC and the National Council agreed to resume broadcasting of the First Channel in Ukraine. There were uneasy talks that had a legal and a political dimension, but nevertheless, the decision was passed.

That is, we should jointly work, diligently and attentively, hold negotiations, listen to each other, and I am sure that every issue that now seems so tangled will find a solution. The same applies to the energy sector. By the way, educational establishments turning out diplomats know the notion of “energy component of state policy”. It has always been and, I guess, will be present in the policy of many states looking into the future. We want our cooperation to rest on economic interests, in the first place. But the logic of today’s development is such that politics, too, are present in bilateral partnership, and are likely to be present in the future.

I will dwell upon one subject already mentioned today – the subject of a common history. This sector witnesses very serious, sometimes tough, sometimes controversial discussions. The 300th anniversary of the Battle of Poltava was a subject of a serious dialogue of historians, and not only historians, from Russia, Ukraine and other countries.

Exchange of opinions and assessments is very important, but it seems to me that emphasis should be made on gains. I will cite two examples. With the assistance of the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation, a conference was held in Moscow devoted to the Battle of Poltava, and today, the “Den” newspaper publishes the presentation made by a Ukrainian scientist. Of course, his speech did not coincide with the assessments given by some Russian scholars. In Russia, too, there are different opinions of those events – for instance, a book by T.Tairova-Yakovleva devoted to Hetman Mazepa met a mixed reaction in Russia. I guess that the discussion should go on the level of scientific, historic research. It should not be translated to the sphere of present-day relations. And one more thing – the memory of the people who fought and died for the ideals of then common state should be honoured.

We together with our Ukrainian partners are trying to achieve concrete results. For instance, the other day,

Russia’s Ambassador to Ukraine V.Chernomyrdin and Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation G.Karasin visited Poltava. A year ago we agreed that the Russian side would restore the Hill of Glory, that is, the common grave of the Russian soldiers who died 300 years ago, rebuild the Memorial Home of Pavlovsky. We met our commitments, and the Ukrainian side did the same. This is the practical result of the work aimed at preservation of the memory of this event that influenced the history of the whole European continent. We are ready to take part in the events arranged by the Ukrainian side, first of all – Poltava residents, who already have a special plan.

This is one of the gains of bilateral relations, spoken about today. We should wage a personal dialogue, meet more frequently, listen to each other, as at today’s Round-table.

V.Chernomyrdin often took part in events conducted by two leading think-tanks of Russia and Ukraine – sponsors of this Round-table. But today, he has important meetings in Moscow devoted to the issues of Russia-Ukraine relations. He asked me to convey his best wishes to all participants of the Round-table and stress the importance of what you are doing. I refer this both to the Muscovites, represented by a strong intellectual team, and the Ukrainian colleagues who gathered the cream of the Ukrainian politics and political science. Good luck to you! ■

RUSSIA AND UKRAINE – POSSIBILITIES OF A DIALOGUE



Igor BUNIN,
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The problem of Russia-Ukraine relations is aggravated by many negative factors. The archetype of two rival brothers has been known since the biblical times. Quite naturally, each side accuses its counterpart of the conflict. From Russia’s viewpoint, contradictions at different points of history were caused by the West encouraging the Ukrainian national movement (be that Austria-Hungary in the XIX century or the USA now), and individual Ukrainian politicians – from Mazepa to Petlura and Bandera. In Ukraine, there is an opinion that Russia’s expansion barred its independent development that otherwise could lead to the establishment on the Ukrainian territory of a state based on European values. As it often happens, polar judgements are biased.



Russia traditionally looks at Ukraine as the “big brother”, considering the “little brother” imperfect, unable of independent existence (in the worst case – ready to betray). Even now, if the Russian political class admit Ukraine’s independence on the level of political logic, “mentally”, on the level of emotions, “by heart”, many cannot accept that fact. This gives rise to harsh statements of some Russian politicians about the status of Crimea that, in turn, meet a negative response in Ukraine. According to pessimistic estimates, reversal of that trend will take decades rather than years of “neighbourly” existence of the two countries. Of course, acceleration of that process, conscious acceptance of the existing realities on the basis of serious dialogue, respect for history and traditions of statehood of each other meet the interests of both countries.

But not everything should be confined to the phenomenon of the “big brother” – there are natural reasons for the present Russian irritation. The known Russian phenomenon that may be termed “complex of June 22” – fear of a sudden enemy attack – even deepened after the wars in Yugoslavia and Iraq. In this connection, the strong negative reaction to eastward NATO enlargement, including the Atlantic integration of Ukraine, is not surprising. The Russian political elite (and whole society) entirely reject even a theoretical possibility of NATO military facilities appearing not far from Belgorod or Rostov-on-Don. It would view such developments as a grave geopolitical defeat.

At the same time, the modern Ukrainian elite looks West, seeing it as the alternative to the Russian influence and an opportunity for Ukraine to join – at least in a long run – the “club of the select few” – the European Union. The only difference between different groups of the Ukrainian elite in this respect is that some seek to utmost speed up that process, disregarding Russia’s opinion, while others try to combine the European (main) vector of the foreign policy with building, as far as possible, normal relations with Moscow, not to cause sharp conflict situations. The geopolitical gravitation of Europe far exceeds similar capabilities of Russia. This factor is also conducive to the growth of tension between the two countries in the sphere of history, leading to so-called “wars of memory”, whose participants have taken a very staunch position and want no compromise.

The “wars of memory” are used by the Ukrainian side for self-assertion, even at the expense of conscious provocation of deterioration of relations with Russia. It is suffice to recall decisions of the recent years shocking Russia, dealing with commemoration of anniversaries of the Battles of Konotop and Poltava and, especially, posthumous award of the status of Hero of Ukraine to Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army R.Shukhevych who a large portion of World War II served in the German Army. Declaration of the

Holodomor as the genocide of the Ukrainian people has become the official ideology, although representatives of different nationalities were also dying of starvation, including many Russians. I.Stalin physically eliminated wealthy peasantry, presented as kulaks, not caring about the nationality of his victims. That tragedy cannot be justified by any arguments, like it alone could enable industrialisation of the country – the grief of the Ukrainian people is natural and understandable for any normal person. But historically perfect assessments require thorough study of sources rather than invention of new myths. Impartiality is needed for analysis of even those historic events that have become a national tragedy.

The situation is further aggravated by the search of identity in the Ukrainian society itself (in this respect, the Russian one seems much more certain). The lack of common historic heroes, different mentalities of the population of different regions of Ukraine pose serious political problems. Meanwhile, the idea of imminent break-up of Ukraine existing in the Russian political class needs revision – despite the remaining serious internal contradictions, the country is not going to break apart. Reasons are many – from the well-known pragmatism of the Ukrainian elites to the deficit of “passion” of the population of the country’s East, its ability to generate new attractive ideas, not only appeal to the Soviet past, keeping deep ideological defence.

It is widely understood that many issues of Russia-Ukraine relations are technical and unreasonably politicised. If their discussion is left for experts, not involving politicians in the process, an additional chance will appear for their successful trade-off solution. Such issues include, i.e., gas agreements, stationing of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol, and historic contradictions, too.

Indeed, many aspects of bilateral relations are strongly politicised, which contributes to their aggravation. But this politicisation is natural, related with the difference in geopolitical preferences of the Russian and Ukrainian elites. Indeed, solution of the Black Sea Fleet problem depends not as much on the Ukrainian Constitution, banning presence of foreign military bases on the country’s territory (one way or another, if desired, a mutually acceptable formula may be found to extend the Fleet’s stationing in Sevastopol even after 2017), as on plans of Atlantic integration of the country. They are indeed inconsistent with Russian Armed Forces stationed on the territory of Ukraine. Since the Western vector of the foreign policy is the main for Ukrainian elites, one can hardly expect some political force in Ukraine proposing an option of keeping the Fleet in Sevastopol. Options for the Ukrainian side differ only tactically – either pushing the Fleet out of Sevastopol by eternal carping, or utmost delay of unpleasant talks with Russia.

Round-table, May 29, 2009



Politicisation of the gas issue is also associated with the geopolitical factor. It is suffice to recall the recent Ukraine-EU declaration of modernisation of the Ukrainian gas transportation system (seemingly, a purely technical issue), signed without Russia. In that case, Ukraine made its choice, seeking Europe to defend its interests from the Russian expansion in the gas transportation sector. “Technically”, such behaviour seems strange. After all, Russian investments, along with European, could help solve the problem of modernisation of that system, not even raising the issue of its privatisation. Even if it theoretically appears on the agenda (such phobias exist in Ukraine), it cannot be solved through backroom negotiations, without the involvement of the Verkhovna Rada. Even in 2004, when agreements were reached about creation of a consortium for management of Ukraine’s gas transportation system, not implemented because of the Orange Revolution, they did not contain provisions of change of ownership.

Therefore, “technical” issues cannot be resolved without understanding of their political dimension. This in no way means that the work of experts pursuing solely professional aspects is vain – on the contrary, in some cases, it helps find optimal solutions of separate problems. One should just realistically assess the limits of their capabilities.

What are the ways to improve Russia-Ukraine relations? I will try to formulate some ideas for Russia (it would be logical if the Ukrainian stand is presented by Ukrainian experts).

First, there is a universal recipe, applicable not only to relations with Ukraine. It presumes growth of Russia’s own “soft power”, enhancement of its attractiveness for other states. A stable, democratic Russia with a diversified hi-tech market economy, respecting human rights and possessing a truly independent judicial system, will be a far more attractive partner than a source of raw materials, a “semi-democratic” state causing phobias of some of its neighbours.

Second, a pragmatic approach to the dialogue with Ukraine, free of both aggressiveness and weakness. Similarly unacceptable are both “Leontiev’s option” (imperial defiance of the Ukrainian independence,

assertions of its temporary nature) and “Nemtsov’s option” (rapprochement with any Ukrainian political forces looking West and criticising the current Russian political regime). It should be made clear what positions in the dialogue with Ukraine are unflinching for Russia (for instance, a negative attitude to rehabilitation of SS in any form), and which are disputable, leaving room for adjustment of its stand with account of the opinion of our partners. The latter may include most of the disputable historic problems.

Third, refusal from unilateral actions and statements that might arouse protests of the counterparty (clear thing, the same recommendation applies to the Ukrainian side, including in the issue of the Atlantic integration of Ukraine). One should firmly react to concrete actions related with violation of legitimate rights and interests of Russia and its citizens, not engage in rhetoric “in general”, largely related with self-affirmation on the international scene. More attention should be paid to the mentality of the partners, understanding of the motives of their actions. Rejection of the ideological stand of opponents (sometimes quite reasonable) should not be accompanied with invention of new or revival of old historic myths, attempts of justification of Stalin’s policy of repressions against all peoples of the USSR, including the Russian, discourse in the spirit of the principle “the end justifies the means”. First of all, such stand is needed for Russia itself, interested in reliable safeguards against return of the totalitarian past even in a “soft”, modified form.

Fourth, the policy of “small affairs”, envisaging active progress in separate sectors of cooperation (political, economic, cultural), maybe not looking spectacular in every particular case. Exactly “small affairs” give examples of successful solution of problems and attainment of mutually acceptable results, counterbalancing negative trends in bilateral relations. Joint projects of civil society institutes, development of contacts between regions and cities of both countries look promising. With time, some “small” projects may evolve into greater ones. Concrete achieved gains should be “translated” in mass media to at least partially offset the numerous “failures” in the media space. This is necessary not to have a feeling of complete hopelessness in the issue of development of bilateral relations.

To be sure, this set of measures is insufficient to build really stable friendly relations – it leaves the key, most painful and politicised problems unresolved (in the current situation, they have no prompt mutually acceptable solution). Of course, complicating factors include internal contradictions within the Ukrainian authorities, rivalry of the elites, that will not end under any outcome of the forthcoming presidential elections.

However, one should start with something. First successful results can bring a positive “chain reaction”, give impetus to qualitative changes in the Russia-Ukraine dialogue. ■



DRAW UP A ROADMAP TO LEAD RUSSIA-UKRAINE RELATIONS OUT OF CRISIS



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I largely agree with the theses of absence of fully-fledged Russian and Ukrainian states expressed today. But, as one known figure used to say, “I have no other intelligentsia, I have no other writers”. We cannot wait for establishment of states, and then act.

In my opinion, now, the chances to attain the task set in the title of our Round-table are improving. *First*, because, indeed, the relations are in the lowest point, and it is time to go up, pushing off from the bottom. *Second*, the U.S. leadership has changed. It is no secret that the U.S. policy influences Russia-Ukraine relations. I well remember from my experience that Americans very often put a dilemma before former Soviet republics – either with Russia, or with us. I strongly hope that now, that trend in the U.S. policy will at least go down. *Third*, it seems to me that the Russian foreign policy is changing for the better – because the crisis hit Russia very painfully. We now argue with Japan which G8 country fell deeper. The situation where we felt our vulnerability is conducive to the decrease in ambitions and claims. And in the foreign policy, it has to live within its means. I see one of its main results in dropping the imperial project as a practical task. Our leadership is quite pragmatic and realize that it is an unaffordable process, moreover, not too attractive.

But why are we so often (and justly) reproached for a neo-imperial policy? I guess, because it is largely domestic in this country, intended for internal consumption. To give people some hope, and so on. This is absolutely incorrect. But at the same time, in practical policy, so-called “neo-imperial tasks” are fewer. What Russia really does not want is its neighbours to join the military Alliance where Russia itself has no place. Or, at least, not soon will have one. Even such an Orthodox as D.Rogozin says: “Maybe, we will raise the issue of joining NATO some day”.

I believe that pragmatism mentioned today many times is the best basis for the development of relations between two independent states – Russia and Ukraine. Fraternal relations will be added, but our work should not rest on them. I recall a child story. Mother gives an apple to a boy and says: “Share with your sister

fraternally”. He asks: “What does this mean?” “This means that you will give her the best piece” – she says. The boy thinks it over, then says to his sister: “Take, share fraternally”.

Now, let me say a few words about Ukraine’s policy. It seems to me that there will be no apocalypses if Russia commands in Ukraine, or Ukraine is westernised, and so on. It seems to me that the multi-vectored nature of Ukraine’s policy comes into sight little by little, and those vectors, I think, can coexist. I will not speak about the known “tender calf”, I will only say that God himself geographically put Ukraine so as to give at a chance to pursue such policy.

It seems to me that at present, the imbalance in the eyes of Ukrainians is not in our favour. I am trying to say in Moscow that we should correct the imbalance in the “Russia-China-USA triangle”, because China has good relations with both the USA and Russia, while we have bad relations with the USA. That imbalance should be removed. I think that Ukraine, too, can do that.

I guess that the European choice of Ukraine is very advantageous for us, and this is spoken out. (All in all, something good was taking place in Russia when it moved to Europe, not vice versa.) The only thing is that in the Ukrainian case, the stages should be interchanged. First, join the EU, and next, raise the issue of NATO. This, I think, could remove some questions, moreover that the situation itself now favours that. In a word, do not hurry – try to help each other. Of course, it is easier to say than to do that, but I believe that Russia-Ukraine relations may be reset (a fashionable saying now), including with account of the home political developments in Ukraine.

It seems to me that we should try to draw up kind of a roadmap to lead Russia-Ukraine relations out of crisis on the basis of the performed analysis. For instance, to prioritise “muting of rhetoric”, de-politicisation of our discussions, etc. And pass that document (one-two pages) to our leaders, if there is a chance. I think that there will be one both in Ukraine (easier), and in Russia (harder).

And the last thing. Speaking of the factors that will contribute to the improvement our relations, it should be added that those relations are, after all, international, that is, between nations. It is the good background for improvement of cooperation. ■

Round-table, May 29, 2009



**ENCOURAGE IMPROVEMENT
OF RUSSIA-UKRAINE COOPERATION**

**Alexander
MUZYKANTSKIY,**
President,
"Russian Public Policy
Centre" Foundation

I wish on behalf of "RPPC" Foundation, a long-standing partner of Razumkov Centre, and on behalf of the entire Russian delegation to greet our Ukrainian counterparts here. The format of today's informal expert meeting seems very important and interesting. Many problems stocked in the Russia-Ukraine relations, some of them are even difficult to formulate. Information abounds but, they say, "the more information, the less sense behind it".

There was not a single minor report on the Russian or Ukrainian side concerning our relations, not denied, somehow "converted" or disavowed the next day. I believe that communication of experts, like today, gives an opportunity to more adequately and fully assess the situation in Russia and in Ukraine.

"RPPC" Foundation and Razumkov Centre conducted an expert poll in Russia and Ukraine about the Russia-Ukraine cooperation – and the overall picture appeared not too joyful. 46% of Russian experts believe that in the recent years the relations deteriorated. The prospects of cooperation are viewed rather sceptically – 53% of respondents predict continuation of instability, regular aggravation of relations.

In some presentations, historic subjects were heard – they referred to Kyiv Rus, the Battle of Poltava, and facts of the modern history of our states. I would narrow that context, picking out the last four years of Russia-Ukraine relations after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. On one hand, those events gave rise to big hopes, euphoria in Ukraine. Similar things were observed in 1991 in Russia and the whole [Soviet] Union.

On the other hand, the Revolution exerted great influence on the Russian policy. A few years ago, fear of possible reproduction of something like that in Russia largely shaped the position of the Russian leadership in the home and, partially, foreign policy.

However, four years passed, and I seem that we are in a new situation now. The period of revolutionary shocks is over in Ukraine, heroes of Maydan give the way to a new generation of politicians. Rephrasing the immortal saying of B.Gryzlov, it became clear that "Maydan is not a place for discussions" – they should be held in a different format. The period of hope that the Orange Revolution will bring forced integration into Europe, accession to the European Union, is over in Ukraine.

The period of fear of Ukrainian revolutionary shocks is over in Russia, and time has come for seemingly normal pragmatic relations, without euphoria, on one hand, and fear, on the other. Such normal pragmatic relations can be built.

At that, we should note that today's discussion touched upon the process of formation of the Ukrainian identity, political nation, of building statehood. The problem of identity may be solved differently, as witnessed by the European and world experience.

In my opinion, Ukraine did not manage to solve the issue of identity on the basis of unity around the values of the Orange Revolution. This opportunity was not used.

The Ukrainian identity began to be formed on another basis. That basis is not new, it was promoted for decades by Ukrainian intellectuals and the Ukrainian Diaspora. I mean contraposition of Ukraine and Russia. In his time, Ukraine's ex-president L.Kuchma wrote a book "Ukraine is not Russia". But it seems to me that identity-building began not on the basis of "Ukraine is not Russia", but on the basis of "Ukraine as anti-Russia".

That position found support on the state level, was legalised in presidential decrees, governmental decisions, and so on. Theoretically, this can be understood, as it creates the image of an external threat. From that viewpoint, Russia fits to that role, for we have been together too long, and along with achievements, there are great many problems, "skeletons in the closet".

But this is futureless. The policy "Ukraine is not Russia" is a complete reflection of the policy "Russia is not Europe", pursued by Russia for centuries, trying to base the Russian identity on contraposition to Europe. The "decline of Europe" was spoken about yet some 150 years ago, and such hopes largely persist in Russia.

This affects the whole range of our mutual relations. There may be another approach, resting not on contraposition but on own values. This applies to both Ukraine and Russia.

The concept of a liberal empire by A.Chubais was mentioned today. And his brother I.Chubais speaks of the theory of "restoration of historic link", where modern Russia is a reproduction of the Russian empire, and the Soviet period is a period of some "break" of history.

It seems to me that another approach prevailed. Some steps, starting from the adoption of the Soviet anthem and ending with the establishment of the Commission for fighting attempts of falsification of history to the detriment of the interests of the Russian Federation, witnesses that attempts are being made to derive today's Russian identity from the Soviet period. It is little productive for Russia-Ukraine relations.

Today's dialogue is frank enough and touches different aspects of bilateral relations. I am far from thinking that our Round-table can solve all the problems accumulated in bilateral relations. However, it can contribute to the change of the formant of cooperation for the better, giving it positive dynamism. Today, we heard a number of interesting, constructive proposals deserving attention. Together, we could contribute to improvement of Russia-Ukraine cooperation. ■