



UKRAINE'S FOREIGN POLICY

Ivan Franko Lecture by His Excellency Victor Batyuk, Ukraine's Ambassador to Canada to the Ukrainian Professional and Business Association of Ottawa at the Centre on East European Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa, March 4, 1994

Ukraine's foreign policy is a subject-matter which did not exist a couple of years ago. Although Soviet Ukraine was a founding member of the UN, at best she had a position on some matters, and it was hardly distinguishable from that of the Soviet Union. The foreign policy of Ukraine was brought into being in the first half of 1990 when the first contested, though not genuinely free, elections took place and the state sovereignty of Ukraine was declared. At that time the goals of non-alignment, neutrality and the desire for a non-nuclear status were proclaimed. But practically speaking the visible state-run foreign policy of Ukraine was brought into being not earlier than when its independence was declared on 24 August 1991, and then confirmed by an impressive 91% majority vote by the referendum on the first of December of the same year.

The first aims of our foreign policy for obvious reasons were extremely pragmatic: to gain recognition, to establish diplomatic relations and an appropriate infrastructure, to create favourable international conditions for preservation of the State's integrity and boundaries which it inherited from Soviet Ukraine. Ukraine confirmed her ultimate goal of becoming a non-nuclear state: she stated clearly that she has no territorial claims whatsoever to any state and will not recognize such claims from whatever quarters towards her own territory. Ukraine confirmed her desire to develop relations with all the states on the basis of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other norms of international law. A pluralistic society and a pluralistic economy were declared as her goals. National equality was effectively implemented. As a result, Ukraine evaded the ethnic conflicts which ravaged many a state in the former U.S.S.R.

THE BASIS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE AS APPROVED BY PARLIAMENT ARE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Ukraine realizes an open foreign policy: she seeks cooperation with all interested parties and seeks to evade dependence on a single state or group of states;
2. Ukraine develops her relations with others on the basis of free will, mutual respect, equal rights, mutual benefit, and noninterference into internal affairs;
3. Ukraine considers no state as her enemy;
4. Ukraine rejects war as means of national policy, and acts in accordance with the principle of non-use of force, promoting exclusively peaceful solutions to any international disputes which are not the result of an aggression;
5. Ukraine does not harbour territorial claims on others, neither does she accept territorial claims from her neighbours;
6. Ukraine honours human rights and provides equal rights for minorities in accordance with international law;
7. Ukraine considers international peace and security as a universal value and seeks to assure her own security - through comprehensive security from Vancouver to Vladivostok;
8. Ukraine recognizes the supremacy and power of law and rejects the law of power; provisions of international law have priority over the provisions of national legislatures;
9. Ukraine thoroughly implements all her international obligations;
10. Ukraine rejects the practice of double standards;
11. Ukraine opposes stationing of troops on foreign territories without the consent of the parties concerned;
12. Ukraine participates in international peace-keeping;
13. Ukraine will use her military forces in the event of being the object of an armed aggression;
14. Ukraine considers herself a successor to the former Soviet Union on an equal footing with other former Soviet Republics and recognizes no exception from this rule, unless it enjoys the consent of all the parties concerned.

The civilized emergence out of the former Soviet Union, integration into European political structures and the world market economy were set as the guidelines. Good neighbourly relations with other countries is the immediate concern of the young state. From the one dimensional Soviet reality, almost overnight my country was brought into the three dimensional world symbolized by the CIS, the CSCE and the U.N. Let's have a quick look at these dimensions.

The disintegration of the F.S.U. structures, the creation of separate states and the transformation of internal ties into external relations with the countries of the F.S.U. were done in a hasty and unbalanced way. But the main thing that matters here is that it has been performed. From the initial stage of this process Ukraine stressed two points: that the CIS is useful for the orderly, civilized dissolution of the USSR, and should in no way be used by the former Centre (Russian Federation) for the reincarnation of the former empire under a new name.

Although for many an attentive observer it was obvious even then, and it is even more obvious now, that the CIS was brought into existence for objective reasons: the need for close economic, cultural, and human ties between the CIS countries which on their part require some special arrangement, which may not and will not strictly correspond to the known structures of international inter-governmental cooperation.