

National Identities and Virtual Foreign Policies among the Eastern Slavs

Taras Kuzio

The three eastern Slavic states—Russia, Ukraine and Belarus—have virtual foreign policies towards each other that are a product of weakly defined national identities inherited from the former USSR. In addition, this virtuality has been compounded by the presence of centrist, former high-ranking *nomenklatura* elites who have led all three countries at different times since 1992. Former “sovereign communist” centrist oligarchs are ideologically amorphous, in both the domestic and foreign policy arenas.

Of the three eastern Slavic states, Ukraine had the strongest ethnic national identity by 1917–1918 when the Tsarist and Austro-Hungarian empires collapsed. A Russian ethnic identity had not been promoted in the Tsarist era, in contrast to an imperial-statist one. Belarus was heavily Russified and all of its territory was to be found within the Tsarist empire.¹ Of the three ethnic groups therefore, only Ukrainians made a major attempt, unsuccessfully, to create an independent state in 1917–1921.²

In the USSR the situation did not radically improve, with the exception again of Ukraine. Russian and Soviet identities were deliberately intertwined, especially after 1934. Belarus emerged from the former USSR with a stronger Soviet Belarusian than Belarusian ethnocultural identity. For Ukraine the record is mixed with nation building accompanied by nation destroying.³ The Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (SFSR) was the only Soviet republic to never declare independence from the USSR, Ukraine held a highly successful referendum on independence while Belarus failed to hold a referendum after declaring independence a day after Ukraine.

These problems of national identity compound those within the political domain. Ideologically driven policies, in either the domestic or foreign arenas, exist only on the left or right in the three eastern Slavic states. Such policies were absent in the Borys Yeltsin era in Russia, but made an appearance with the rise of Vladimir Putin after March 2000. In Ukraine “sovereign communists” took charge of Ukraine with the election of Leonid Kravchuk as president in December 1991 and have remained in control ever since, evolving into centrist oligarchs. Post-Soviet Ukraine has therefore never had ideologically driven elites in power. In Belarus, the situation resembled Ukraine until the election of Alyaksandr Lukashenka in July 1994, except that Belarus had no presidency between 1991 and 1994. After his election, Belarus

had an ideologically driven foreign policy.

The main impact of the presence of non-ideologically driven centrist politicians in Russia (since 1991), Ukraine (since 1991) and Belarus (1991–1994) is on their inability to outline clear and consistent medium- to long-term domestic or foreign policies. Clear and consistent policies make their appearance in Belarus only from 1994 and never in Ukraine and Russia.

This combination of amorphous national identities and rule by non-ideological centrists has led to virtual foreign policies in all three eastern Slavs since 1991. The Appendix provides a summary of eastern Slavic foreign policies.

Russian National Identity and the “Near Abroad”

In the USSR, the only republic with no institutions of its own was the Russian SFSR. This was rectified only in 1990 by President Boris Yeltsin, who sought to build a power base independent of the Soviet Union, which was ruled by his arch-enemy, Mikhail Gorbachev. These new Russian institutions were later supplemented by Soviet ones taken over when the USSR collapsed.

Each of the 14 non-Russian republics included a titular nation that “owned” the republic as its homeland. These Soviet republican ethnic identities competed with a more civic Soviet identity at the all-union level. Nationality policies in all 14 non-Russian republics forged intense loyalties to their territorial boundaries, reflected in the high support given to territorial integrity in the post-Soviet era by ruling elites.

In some cases—Central Asia, for example—Soviet policies facilitated nation building and Russification was not so abrasive. In others, like Ukraine and Belarus, Russification was highly intensive from the 1950s to the 1980s in order to produce an eastern Slavic core majority for the Soviet Union. Even today, the Soviet Belarusian identity—which President Lukashenka has promoted since 1994—is stronger than the Belarusian ethnocultural one. In Ukraine a Soviet identity was prevalent only in the Donbas in the early 1990s, but it has since declined. Nevertheless, the Soviet legacy produced a more widespread Russophile orientation in the Russified cities of eastern Ukraine.⁴

The Russian SFSR had no republican institutions because “Russia” and the “Soviet Union” were conflated into one identity. In the Soviet era, Russian nationalist groups had a completely different agenda from nationalist groups in the non-Russian republics. Russian nationalism was similar to British nationalism, which sought to maintain an empire or great state and prevent the secession of outlying regions (the main difference being that England and Scotland had been nation-states prior to the creation of the U.K. whereas Russia was never a nation-state).⁵ Non-Russian nationalism sought to establish independent states and was therefore more analogous to Irish nationalism within the U.K. Russian dissident groups did not seek to take the Russian SFSR out of the Soviet Union, but merely to “democratize” it. Today no major Russian political group—again unlike nationalist and national-democratic

groups in the non-Russian successor states—seeks to withdraw Russia from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

A second problem Russia faces is that there is no historical precedent to fall back on in building a nation-state. A minority of Russian intellectuals has proposed that Vladimir-Suzdal/Muscovy be the base upon which to draw a historical antecedent.⁶ But Russia's elites have largely ignored this. The more popular view is of Russia as a "great power," however untrue it is in the non-nuclear sphere. As a "great power" the new Russian nation-state needs to seek legitimacy from its imperial and Soviet past, not from Muscovy. This is clearly President Vladimir Putin's preference, as seen in the continued use of the Russian double-headed eagle and the music of the Soviet anthem. It is only by building on a great power legacy that Russia can claim "equality" with the U.S. within the G8 group and vis-a-vis NATO.

By choosing to build a post-Soviet identity on the basis of Russia's imperial/Soviet past, rather than Muscovy, the new Russian state will find it difficult to forge a modern Russian identity grounded within a nation-state. This would require "the deconstruction of the symbiosis between Russian and Soviet imperial identity."⁷ Western policy towards Russia that continues to play up to Russia's demands to be treated as a "great power," as in the newly created Russia–NATO Council, therefore serves only to harm the creation of a modern non-imperial Russian nation-state.

What Is Russia?

For Russians the Soviet Union, not the Russian SFSR, was their homeland. It is not surprising that it has been difficult in the post-Soviet era to withdraw the Russian national consciousness to the boundaries of the Russian Federation, and especially problematic in relation to Ukraine and Belarus, which are not seen as "foreign." Opinion polls in Russia since 1992 have consistently shown that a majority of Russians see Ukrainians and Belarusians not as separate ethnic groups but as somehow "Russian" (i.e. eastern Slavic and "Russian" are basically one and the same).

Mikhail Leontyev, presenter on the Russian television program *Odnako*, was ordered to pay a fine of 2,500 hryvni (approximately U.S.\$500) in February 2002 by a Kyiv court for defaming former prime minister and leader of the Our Ukraine bloc Viktor Yushchenko's wife, Kateryna. Leontyev refused. This was because he did not "care a shit about the ruling regime," and because the ruling regime "has convinced me of the fact that there is no such state as Ukraine." This was because Ukraine "has no prospects for realising its sovereignty and requires protection on the part of a greater and more cultural state" (presumably a reference to Russia). Leontyev's views are quite common in Russia.

Equating "Russia" with only the Russian Federation may only take place over many decades through nation and state building. This process is weakened by Russia providing continued sustenance to an eastern Slavic union with Belarus that Russia

defines as the incorporation of Belarus within Russia. Russia continually makes overtures to Ukraine to join this union without understanding that in Ukraine only the extreme left support such a move. Not only centre-right national democrats but all centrist oligarch parties as well are opposed to Ukraine's membership in the Russia–Belarus union. The same is true of national-democrats and centrists in Belarus.⁸

Russians in the USSR had an attachment to the former USSR (not to the Russian Federation) and a deep belief that Ukrainians and Russians are part of one “family,” in which Russians are the “elder brother.” In this patronizing hierarchy Ukrainians (and Belarusians) are allegedly incapable of creating and sustaining independent states because they are “peasant bumpkins.” Consequently, the Russian authorities concur with Russians in Ukraine that they should not be treated as an ethnic minority, since this would separate them from other Russian speakers, their fellow “compatriots,” and therefore divide Russian speakers along ethnic lines.

The question “What is Russia?” has ramifications in other areas. Post-Soviet Ukrainian historiography and schoolbooks have gradually “nationalized” the history of Kyiv Rus’ as the first Ukrainian state.⁹ The city of Kyiv has numerous monuments to Kyiv Rus’ heroes. In January 2002 President Putin instructed historians specializing in Rus’ to “gain insight into how to form a national ideology” and to advise him in answering the question “What Russian city can be considered the historical and cultural center of Russian civilization?”¹⁰

Which city will Russian historians come up with in answer to this question? In 1982 the city of Kyiv celebrated its 1,500th anniversary, making it 600 years older than Moscow. Who then is the real “elder brother,” Russia or Ukraine? Belarus has greater difficulties in dealing with the question of the hierarchy of eastern Slavs, since Minsk did not play an important role in eastern Slavic history, unlike Kyiv.

The Weakness of Russian Nationalism

When the Soviet Union disintegrated, it was widely feared that the 24.8 million Russians living outside the Russian SFSR in the non-Russian republics would mobilize along the same lines as the Serbs in the former Yugoslavia. In a 2002 poll by Russian Public Opinion Monitor 73% of Russians thought “often or very often” that Russians living abroad were subject to discrimination. Another 18% thought about this “sometimes or rarely” and only 1% never did.

The mobilization of Russians outside Russia, however, has not occurred. The question is why it has not.¹¹ In Moldova the secession of the Transdnister republic had less to do with ethnic Russian nationalism than with a regional regime that had supported the August 1991 putsch and mobilized Russian speakers with a Soviet/eastern Slavic ideology. Lukashenka promotes a similar ideology, except that he has less use for the Russian imperial past than the Transdnister regime did. Such a mix of pan-eastern-Slavic and Soviet internationalist ideology is more prevalent

than pure ethnic Russian nationalism in Belarus and more popular in the Crimea.

One explanation for the weakness of Russian nationalism in the former Soviet Union, and therefore the inability of Russians outside Russia to mobilize, is the lack of an ethnocultural base. Serbian ethnic nationalism developed within the independent nation-state that preceded Yugoslavia. And within Yugoslavia itself the Serbs had their own republican institutions.¹²

This was very different to Russian experience in the Soviet Union. Prior to the formation of the USSR in 1922, Russian identity was shaped within an all-Russian imperial framework, not a nation-state. This supra-national identity continued after the fall of Tsarism. Russian identity is therefore more imperial and statist than ethnocultural. As we see in the case of Ukraine, only regions with strong ethnocultural identities (those in the west and center) can mobilize the population.¹³ Prizel points out that there is no basis for populism in Ukraine (and Russia) because of the weakness of national identity, lack of civil society and amorphous, atomized populations.¹⁴ Where identity is confused, regional, cross-cutting or civic-territorial, as in eastern and southern Ukraine, mobilization has proved difficult. In addition, groups that cut across ethnic lines (Russian speakers, for example) tend to reduce mobilization and thus ethnic conflict. In contrast to the weak performance of pure ethnic Russian parties, those who champion supra-national ideologies (such as the communists) are more successful in attracting voters in Ukraine.

Because the Soviet Union promoted Russian identity only within the framework of an all-Soviet supra-national identity, there is a lack of an identity grounded in ethnocultural terms. The post-Soviet Russian identity is thus an amalgam of Soviet, pan-eastern-Slavic and Russian imperial constructs rather than a purely ethnic Russian one. This is also true of the Communist Party of Ukraine which is more pan-eastern-Slavic than Soviet internationalist.¹⁵ According to a poll taken in the summer of 2001 by the Public Opinion Foundation only 68% of Russians consider themselves Slavs. Twenty-eight percent believe “Slav” is equivalent to “Russian,” 16% believe “Slav” applies to all three eastern Slavic peoples and 6% said “Slav” includes other ethnic groups as well.

Opposition by a minority of Russians to moderate Ukrainianization is conducted through five arguments, Fournier believes. These include resistance to the division of “one (Russian/eastern Slavic) people” into three, the alleged inadequacy of Ukrainian for the role of a state language, the view that Russian is not a “foreign” language in Ukraine, hostility to the alleged removal of Russian language and culture from Ukraine, and opposition to the redefinition of Russians as an ethnic minority. Protests against alleged Ukrainianization are conducted in the name of a linguistic—not ethnic—group. The aim of these protests is not equality status for Russian and Ukrainian but “the restoration of the Russian language’s dominant status,” as it was in the Tsarist and Soviet eras. This “would in turn perpetuate a Russian-speaking identity.”¹⁶

Another reason that conflict has not erupted in the former USSR is that it is a

misnomer to define the Russians outside the Russian Federation as a “diaspora.” Western observers of the former Soviet Union tend to apply the Western understanding of ethnicity to the results of the last Soviet census, which was taken in 1989. This census found 24.8 million Russians living outside the Russian SFSR, half of whom were in Ukraine. In reality, those who classified themselves as Russians in the 1989 census were not always ethnic Russians, because of the conflation of Russian and Soviet identity referred to earlier. It is more likely that “Russian” in the 1989 census had the supra-national territorial-civic meaning of *rossiyanin* rather than ethnic meaning of *russki*. Among these *rossiyanye* there were ethnic Russians, those who said they were Russians for career advancement and others who had mixed marriages in which one partner was a Russian. In Ukraine, for example, 30% of marriages in the Soviet era were mixed, especially in eastern Ukraine.

Thus, the December 2001 Ukrainian census showed a radical 3 million decline in the number of Russians living in Ukraine, because some of those who defined themselves as Russians in 1989 re-identified themselves as ethnic Ukrainians. In Eastern Europe “citizenship” and “nationality” are often used interchangeably, as they are in Western Europe. Although Ukrainian passports do not indicate ethnicity, as did their Soviet predecessors, birth certificates still do.¹⁷

President Putin told the Congress of Russian Compatriots in October 2002 that by “compatriots” he meant a spiritual community of different ethnic groups oriented towards Russian culture and language. Nevertheless, the Congress was criticized for being of more “ornamental-propagandistic character” than substantive.¹⁸ Indeed, Russia is unlikely to push too aggressively on this issue, in order not to alienate such countries as Ukraine. Russia will, however, continue to applaud political parties within Ukraine, Moldova and elsewhere in the CIS that support upgrading the Russian language to an official or second state language, as has already taken place in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

As with the Russian Orthodox Church, Putin’s policies on these questions remain confused. In March 2001 a presidential decree ordering the Foreign Ministry to protect the rights of “compatriots” in the CIS followed the resuscitation of the government Commission on Compatriots Affairs. This will prove difficult because new legislation in areas such as citizenship does not give special preference to Russophone immigrants from the CIS. Russia withdrew from the Bishkek agreement on visa-free travel within the CIS. There is still no Russian legal term for “compatriots” (*sootchestvenniki*), though the latter term is usually understood as referring to Russophones in the former Soviet Union.

A movement to support the Union of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia (ZUBR) is active in all three countries and Moldova. It received a mere 0.43% of the vote in Ukraine’s parliamentary elections in March 2002. It has 130 deputies in Russia’s State Duma and had the same number in the 1998–2002 Ukrainian parliament, mainly drawn from the communists. But since the Communist Party of Ukraine’s faction nearly halved as a result of the 2002 election, to 66 deputies, the number of

ZUBR cross-faction members in the newly elected Ukrainian parliament are likewise reduced. The founding congress of the Moldovan branch of ZUBR took place in November 2001 in Chisinau, and Valeriy Klimenko, leader of the Ravnopraviye (Equal Rights) movement, was elected its head.

In the Crimea, the Russian Bloc, which won only 0.73% of the national vote in the 2002 election, was composed of regional branches of the Ukrainian Slavic Party and the Party of Slavic Unity. Its Russian nationalist program called for the transformation of the Crimea into a Russian autonomous republic, opposed quotas in the Crimean Supreme Soviet for Tatars, and demanded the recognition of Russians as a second titular (indigenous) ethnic group in Ukraine. Yet these ideas proved to be unpopular even in the Crimea. In the March 2002 Ukrainian parliamentary elections, the Russian Bloc came in third in the city of Sevastopol, with 8.86%, and fifth in the Crimea, with 4.76%.

Crimea, the only region of Ukraine with an ethnic Russian majority, prefers to vote for the supra-national communists rather than Russian ethnic nationalists. The communists came first in the Crimea and Sevastopol, with 33.91% and 32.73%, respectively. Pure ethnic Russian nationalism is therefore weaker than Soviet “internationalism,” which incorporates elements of Russian nationalism and pan-eastern-Slavism. As Fournier points out, Russians in both Russia and Ukraine see themselves not as ethnic Russians per se, but as Russian speakers. Russian nationalist parties promoted this view in the March 2002 elections in Ukraine,¹⁹ which translated into the ludicrous conclusion that half of the population of Ukraine are therefore “Russians.”²⁰ A February 2000 poll of Russian elites found that nearly a third saw Ukrainians as “Russians living in Ukraine.”²¹

Fournier rightly criticizes Western scholars who mechanically divide Ukraine into Russian and Ukrainian-speakers based on “language of preference” rather than the Soviet census category of “native language.” Although many Ukrainians may use Russian, this does not mean that the symbolic importance of Ukrainian is no longer important to them as “their native language.”²²

Russian Identity and the CIS

Russian identity cannot confine itself only to the boundaries of the Russian Federation because of the legacy of the Soviet Union, in which Russian and Soviet were the same. Russia has consistently attempted to speak on behalf of the CIS in the international arena on questions like NATO enlargement or in protesting actions like NATO’s bombing of Kosovo and Serbia, much to the chagrin of states such as Ukraine.

Russia has also viewed the former USSR as an exclusively Russian sphere of influence. In Moldova and Belarus, Russia is interested only in geopolitics, ignores the lack of human rights and does not support political or economic reform. In the March 2002 Ukrainian elections, the Russian ambassador to Ukraine, Viktor

Chernomyrdin, along with other high-ranking Russian officials, openly interfered by calling on Ukrainian voters to vote for “pro-Russian” forces (that is, not Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine). During the elections, Putin met only one Ukrainian party leader, Petro Symonenko, leader of the Ukrainian communists, during a meeting with Russian communist leader Gennady Zyuganov.

Russia has reserved for itself the exclusive right to undertake peacekeeping missions in the CIS. In reality, Russian peacekeeping operations in Moldova and Georgia have served only to freeze conflicts on the ground in Moscow’s geopolitical favor. Thus Russia’s military establishment loudly protested the arrival of American military advisers in Georgia. The enlargement of NATO, including the three Baltic states at the November 2002 Prague summit, something Russia has long opposed, has forced Russia to withdraw its no-go “red line” for NATO from the former USSR to the CIS.

Russian identity has also influenced Russia’s unwillingness to accept a “hard” definition of CIS borders. While not opposing the continued demarcation of CIS “external borders,” which these states inherited from the USSR, Russia has opposed the demarcation of “internal borders” in the CIS. It views the CIS as neither fully sovereign nor quite like the former USSR, but something in between—a “Near Abroad.”²³

Belarusian–Russian Union: Casualty of Weak National Identities

Since the mid 1990s Belarus and Russia have declared as their strategic foreign policy goal “union.” Looking back on the past few years a Russian newspaper summed this up as follows: “The five years of the existence of the Russian–Belarusian union demonstrated that it is possible to declare [this union] but impossible to create it.”²⁴ The Moldovan communist President Vladimir Voronin, elected in Spring 2001, became so quickly exasperated with the union that he moved away from his earlier pledge to take Moldova into it because it was “more words than real action.” He saw no benefit for Moldova in joining a virtual union.

The union between Russia and Belarus came about as a consequence of Lukashenka’s election in July 1994 and his successful attempt at establishing an authoritarian regime. In Russia, President Yeltsin was interested in playing the nationalist and pan-Slavic card to draw away voters from his main challenger in the 1996 presidential elections, communist leader Zyuganov.

Already two years into the project Lukashenko was complaining that things were moving slowly and that “Russia is just not ready for that” (i.e. a union). A year later he accused Russia of approaching the question of union in an unserious manner.

Lukashenka was initially optimistic because of Russia’s new President Putin, who has reinstated the Soviet national anthem as Russia’s. Putin also described the union as an “epochal event” that “paves the way to a union of states that will require a judicial basis and a common economic, defense, and humanitarian expanse.”

Nevertheless arguments soon broke out again and the union remains still virtual. The union has little relevance after NATO expanded into the former USSR, Russia upgraded its relationship with NATO and established an alliance with the U.S. against international terrorism. Russia and Belarus are still unable to agree the basis of what type of union they should create because of their weakly defined national identities.²⁵ The union has a more symbolic than substantive role.

The Union as a Step to Reviving the USSR?

It has never been clear whether the union is to be a stepping stone to the revival of a new USSR or a different type of union? On a visit to Cuba in 2001 Lukashenka quoted President Fidel Castro's "fervent support" for the union, presumably because Castro saw it as leading to the revival of the USSR. President Putin rejects any union built on the basis of the Soviet legacy and prefers the EU as a model. Lukashenka prefers to look to the former USSR.

Neither a revived USSR nor a new union interests any other CIS leader, including Russophile states such as Armenia, Kazakhstan or Kirgizia. President Kuchma has rejected Ukraine's membership of the union on many occasions. Nevertheless, Russian nationalists and communists remain optimistic that CIS states will join the queue to join as soon as it is created. They are likely to be disappointed.

Plans to broaden the union's membership have always faced two fundamental problems. Firstly, the union was backed only by the communists in the other CIS states. In Belarus this is clouded even further because one communist party backs the union while another is allied to the opposition and opposes it. In Ukraine, everybody to the right of the communists opposes it. Oleksandr Moroz's socialists refuse to support a union with "Russian oligarchs."²⁶

Secondly, only Belarus believes that the union will lead to a relationship of equal states both of whom will retain their sovereignty. Everybody else, from the Belarusian opposition to all other non-communists in the remaining ten CIS states, sees the union as the loss of Belarusian sovereignty to Russia. This is also the way in which Central Europe and the West see it.

Economic Integration

Military integration and cooperation has gone further than their economic counterparts in the union. "Economic integration has simply not come about."²⁷ The union cost Russia U.S.\$1.5–2 billion per annum in 1996–1997, according to Andrei Illarionov, Director of the Moscow-based Institute of Economic Analysis. This cost owes to Russia writing off Belarus's energy debts, charging it around one-third of the price it charges Ukraine for gas and allowing Belarus to exploit their customs union by taxing goods in transit from Russia via Belarus.

The Belarusian Chamber of Representatives, the upper house of parliament, voted

on 12 April 2001 to ratify an agreement to introduce a single Russian–Belarusian currency on 1 January 2005. The ratification of the accord was tied to Russia’s dispersal of a U.S.\$100 million credit. If a joint currency is in fact introduced in 2005 this will significantly increase Russia’s influence over Belarusian domestic affairs.

The reconciliation of two very different economies and economic policies in Belarus and Russia may yet impede the speedy introduction of a joint currency. Putin—at least publicly—remains committed to economic reform within an authoritarian political structure. Lukashenka, on the other hand, regards the post-Soviet economic reforms conducted in Russia, Ukraine and some other CIS states as disastrous and a grave mistake.

What is Lukashenka’s solution, then, to the problem of reconciling economies with different levels of reform? The answer is staring Russia in the face, Lukashenka believes: “Russia should make an effort to employ our model of reform as soon as possible. We are showing Russia how an economy should be reformed, with a view to Russia’s mistakes.”²⁸ Fortunately, Yeltsin did not listen to this advice and Putin is unlikely to either.

Orienting Belarus towards Russia and obtaining direct and indirect Russian subsidies postpones dealing with economic problems in Belarus, such as having the highest inflation rate in the CIS. Union with Russia is “actually saving our country and our economy,” Lukashenka believes, because it allows him to maintain a certain level of living standards. Without Russian subsidies, the Lukashenka regime would be unlikely to last long.

Military Integration

Russia has obtained what it seeks from Belarus within the military sphere. Lukashenka is, though, prepared to go much further than Russia in creating a “300,000 joint Belarusian–Russian military group,” which Putin has not supported presumably because the need for such a large military force is unclear. Against whom would it be pointed? Poland, the Baltic states, NATO, Ukraine or all of them? The proposal smacks more of Lukashenka’s Sovietophile, xenophobic and ideologically driven view of the outside world. A worldview that contradicts Russia’s more pragmatic relationship with the West and NATO, a relationship that has grown into an informal alliance since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S. With Russia lessening its objections to NATO enlargement, Lukashenka’s worldview is not in line with Putin’s and the contradiction between them is increasing.

The usefulness of Belarus in military terms is also less than would appear because of geography. For all Lukashenka’s Sovietophile views, he has never expressed any interest in security issues in the Trans-Caucasus or Central Asia. Belarusian armed forces are forbidden by law to operate outside their republic. Although Belarus is a member of the CIS Collective Security Treaty (since May 2002, Organization), it plays no role in CIS security or peacekeeping operations in Tajikistan, Central Asia’s

border with Afghanistan, Abkhazia or South Ossetia. A poll by the Belarusian Independent Institute of Socioeconomic and Political Studies found 52% of Belarusians afraid that union with Russia would lead to Belarusian armed forces being dispatched to hot spots like Chechnya.²⁹ A new law in June 2002 allows Belarusian troops to be sent abroad for “peacekeeping” but not to “hot spots.”

Russia and Human Rights in Belarus

Russia has been very happy to reciprocate Belarusian support within the international arena by turning a blind eye to human rights abuses in Belarus. As Putin admitted, “The Russian Federation has always backed the Belarusian position at international forums. So it has been and so it will continue.”³⁰ Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Yevgenii Gusev said, “I think that Belarus, which is today one of Europe’s leading democracies, should be represented in the Council of Europe.”³¹

Yeltsin’s human rights commissioner, Oleg Mironov, conferred a spotless human rights record on Belarus after a visit to “dispel the myths about human rights violations in Belarus.” He reported that Belarus supposedly has an independent judicial system, constitutional court and supreme court, the right of an opposition to exist, no inter-ethnic conflicts and a civil code. Since then Russian and CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly officials have given glowing reports about the “fairness” of parliamentary and presidential Belarusian elections, such as those in 2000–2001.

Turning a blind eye to human rights abuses in Belarus not only ignores the critical views of all Western countries, multilateral bodies and international human rights organizations, but even Belarusian violations of Russian human rights. Lukashenka has repeatedly been critical of the Russian media for its mocking and critical portrayal of himself and Belarus. His response has been to occasionally turn off Russian television broadcasts. If Russian television was curtailed in such a manner in Ukraine the Russian Foreign Ministry and parliament would have undoubtedly released protest notes about the “infringement of the rights of Russian speakers.” Not, though, in the case of Russia’s closest ally, Belarus. Even the murder of an ORT (Russian Public Television) cameraman, Dmitry Zavadsky, by a Belarusian presidential death squad did not stir Russia’s Foreign Ministry, parliament or nationalist organizations to action. Again, one can imagine the outcry if he had been murdered in Ukraine.

Confused Opinion Polls

There has never been overwhelming support for union with Russia in Belarus. Support has been greater than for integration with Europe but it has never gone above 50% and encompassed a majority of Belarusians. Zerkalo, a sociological service of the Belapan news agency, found that only 47% of Minsk residents supported unity with Russia while 20% disapproved.³² In another poll by the Independent Institute of

Socioeconomic and Political Studies the same number, but this time throughout Belarus, supported union but 34% also opposed it (16% would not participate in a referendum).³³

In an authoritarian political environment Belarusians do not have the opportunity to freely express their will on this question. Lukashenka's pet project is opposed by one of two communist parties, anti-Russian national democrats and centrist business, Russophone and former *nomenklatura* political interests. If this alternative viewpoint to union were allowed equal access to the media it is not at all certain that Lukashenka's union project would be successful.

Belarusians are also only too aware that standards of living are higher in Poland than in Russia. A poll by the Independent Institute of Socioeconomic and Political Studies found 85% preferred life in Poland to Russia. Asked to name exemplary countries 40% said Germany, 20% the U.S. and only 0.5% Russia.³⁴

Virtual Union or Russian Gubernia?

Lukashenka's pet project suffers from being a virtual policy that lacks clear-cut definitions and goals. Neither Lukashenka nor Belarusians are at all clear what kind of "union" they seek. In the Independent Institute of Socioeconomic and Political Studies poll, 63% answered affirmatively to the question "Do you want Belarus to be an independent, sovereign country?" Only 10% said no.

Does union mean that Belarus will join Russia as a *gubernia* or autonomous republic? Within the large body of Russian supporters of union with Belarus, the communists (who are the ones who most closely follow moves on integration) define "union" as Belarus becoming part of Russia. Russian nationalists agree with their communist allies.

Nevertheless, opinion polls of support for "union" between Belarus and Russia fail to come to grips with how "union" is defined. A similar problem exists when dealing with pro-union support in eastern Ukraine.³⁵ When polls seek to ascertain support for a "union" that is ill defined it obtains high support. When "union" is defined more clearly as full political unification and loss of independence, support for union in Belarus drops by half. Clear majorities in both Russia and Belarus back "union" that does not harm their countries' independence or sovereignty.

The type of "union" that has large support in Belarus is opposed to the country being absorbed by Russia, would give both parties greater sovereignty than in the former federal USSR and more closely resembles a confederation. Belarusians assume that integration into a union will not harm their sovereignty, a proposition that is naïve, to say the least. A decade of Belarusian independence has increased the number of Belarusians who appreciate independence and therefore oppose any union that would harm this status. "The sovereignty and independence of the Belarus state are sacred notions to every citizen," Lukashenka said, because they remain "inflexible and unshakeable."³⁶

Lukashenka has always categorically rejected proposals from Russian communists, and at times former President Yeltsin, that union should mean the six *oblasts* of Belarus becoming part of Russia. “No president of Belarus would take that step. In the Soviet Union, Belarus had more sovereignty,” Lukashenka complained.³⁷ “Even Stalin did not plan to deprive Belarus of its sovereignty,” Lukashenka believes.³⁸ Union, in his eyes, would be between two equal sovereign states, something one finds difficult to imagine when one side has 150 times more population.

Lukashenka’s ideological amalgam of Soviet Belarusian nationalism and pan-Slavism has little in common with Russian nationalism. Lukashenka said he will always defend his country’s sovereignty because he possesses sufficient “healthy nationalism” to secure the country’s interests. For some reason, he complains, some Russian circles believe that Belarusians “have only recently climbed down from the trees and have eaten all the bark and leaves from these trees,” thus forcing Belarus to seek Russian aid. Such a view is wrong, humiliating and offensive to Belarusian “national dignity.”³⁹ Lukashenka has regularly complained about the Russian media’s portrayal of Belarusians as still wearing peasant clothes and only seeking to milk Russia because they are “beggars.”⁴⁰

The Union and Russian National Identity

Fears of NATO enlargement have played less of a role in Russian support for union than its own confused post-Soviet national identity, a confusion also found in Belarus.⁴¹ This, in turn, has led to a virtual Russian–Belarusian union.

Belarusian Foreign Minister Ivan Antanpovich told his Russian Academy of Sciences audience that the union was based on a “1000 year tradition of making a great state,” a historical myth based on nineteenth-century Russian nationalist and post-1934 Soviet historiography. Such a state should be “Slavic Orthodox.” But the Russian Orthodox Patriarch sees this union differently, believing that Belarusian independence is a “misunderstanding,” a view that he also has expressed about Ukraine. The Patriarch believes that the union is a stepping stone towards gathering “the sacred lands of the one and single fatherland.” Lukashenka would only partly agree as he attempts to reconcile his support for Belarusian independence, within an overall understanding of sovereignty developed in the USSR, with his pan-Slavic yearning for closeness to Russia. Hence, all we have is virtuality in the Russian–Belarusian union project.

Belarusians and Russians look upon union in different ways because of the legacy of Soviet nationality policy. Both sides appeal to pan-Slavic sentiment but Belarus also developed Soviet Belarusian nationalism in the USSR. The Russian SFSR had no separate institutions until 1990 and therefore a territorial loyalty to this republic failed to develop among Russians. Russian loyalty was directed to the USSR while Belarusian loyalty was divided between Soviet Belarussia and the USSR.

Both Russia and Belarus constantly refer to themselves as the closest in “roots,

language and culture,” as Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev said neither side’s citizens feel themselves to be in a foreign country when traveling to the other.⁴² Russian Deputy Prime Minister Valery Serov sees Belarus and Russia as having been split apart, a sense that is akin to a Russian region separating, not a foreign country.

The evolution and amorphousness of the Belarusian–Russian union reflects inherited, confused national identities found in both Belarus and Russia, wherein the two sides define union in different ways. Slow progress in the union also owes to Russia’s greater interest in developing relations on the international stage as a “great power” through an alliance with the U.S. than in a union with Belarus which the two sides see differently. These views stem from the notion that the eastern Slavs are all “Russian.”

National Identity and Russia’s Virtual Foreign Policy towards Ukraine

As Bukkvoll has pointed out, post-Soviet Russia has never developed a coordinated strategy towards independent Ukraine.⁴³ He provides three reasons for this.

Firstly, Russia’s entire political spectrum could not reconcile itself to coming to terms with Ukraine as an independent state. If Ukrainian independence was only a temporary aberration from the normal course of affairs, there was obviously no reason for any medium- to long-term strategy towards it.

Secondly, apart from oil and gas, Russia had few levers with which to influence Ukraine. The use of oil and gas was made more difficult because Russia obtained the bulk of its hard currency earnings from energy exported through Ukraine. In addition, Russia’s business elites were not interested in cutting energy supplies to Ukraine.

Thirdly, Russia itself had no coherent foreign policy in general. Russia inherited Soviet institutions, such as the Foreign Ministry, which provided it with experts on international matters but not on its “Near Abroad,” including Ukraine. The short-lived Ministry for the CIS was provided with few resources. Centrist former *nomenklatura* elites under Yeltsin were by default dominated by personal and clannish interests rather than collective problem solving or strategic policy planning.⁴⁴

It took Russia five years to sign a treaty with Ukraine in 1997 and then a further two for both houses of its parliament to ratify the treaty. Three years later Russia’s actions in a number of areas show that although Ukraine’s borders might be no longer in question Russia still finds it extremely difficult to recognize Ukraine as an equal and sovereign state. Russia still refuses to demarcate its border with Ukraine.⁴⁵ It took Russia five years (1999–2003) to even delimit the border, and then only on land. This has not prevented territorial conflict, as in Autumn 2003 over Tuzla.

Viktor Chernomyrdin was appointed Ambassador to Ukraine and “Special Presidential Envoy for the Development of Russian–Ukrainian Trade and Economic Ties” in May 2001. Since then his actions show a confusion as to whether he also has

a third position, that of regional governor.

Chernomyrdin's appointment was meant to consolidate the Russian vector in Ukraine's "multi-vector" foreign policy as the primary one after the West's growing disenchantment with Ukraine in the aftermath of the "Kuchmagate" crisis of winter 2000–2001. During the March 2002 elections he openly interfered in favor of pro-presidential parties, helped fan the flames of an "anti-nationalist" campaign against pro-Western forces⁴⁶ and chided Ukrainian Foreign Ministry State Secretary Oleksandr Chaly as an "obtuse man" when he outlined Ukraine's goal as joining the EU, not the alternative Russian-dominated Eurasian Economic Community.

Chernomyrdin's governing style owes to two reasons related to Russian national identity. Firstly, since the creation of the CIS in December 1991, Russia has looked upon the CIS as a loose commonwealth or confederation guided and led by Russia. Commonwealth of Independent States members possess only partial sovereignty as the "Near Abroad," a region that is no longer part of the USSR but, at the same time, is not as fully sovereign as the "Far Abroad." Chernomyrdin and the Russian elite are hostile to Yushchenko's Our Ukraine foreign policy of integration into the EU and NATO because this is seen as an attempt at fully breaking with Russia. Hence, Russia's open support for either the Russophile Communist Party of Ukraine, which wants Ukraine to join the Russian–Belarusian union, and oligarchic centrist parties who back a "Little Russian" foreign policy strategy of "To Europe with Russia!"

Secondly, Russia still finds it difficult to accept Ukraine (and Belarus) as separate nations with independent statehood. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said that Ukraine and Russia were slated to be close "strategic partners" because of "our shared linguistic, religious, cultural, and historical legacy, our kindred mentality."⁴⁷ President Kuchma agrees. Speaking at the Odesa Naval University, President Kuchma referred to the "1,000 year-long history of family ties" and added that "10 years of Ukraine's independence have proved that we cannot live without Russia." Russia has used a concern for "compatriots" (i.e. Russian speakers) to complain constantly about the alleged infringement of their rights in education and the media in Ukraine.

Although only the extreme left support Ukraine's membership of the Russian–Belarusian union, Russia still holds out hope that this will change. Ambassador Chernomyrdin was asked if a union of the three eastern Slavs was possible. His reply was indicative: "When Ukrainian society matures to this point it will opt for such a step." This is another example of amorphous national identities influencing foreign policy that seeks to create a romantic ideal of the three eastern Slavic nations living in cosy harmony under the guidance of the "elder brother." Only the Communist Party of Ukraine supports Ukraine's membership of the Russian–Belarusian union.

In Russia's eyes, the only difference between frontiers in the USSR and those within the CIS are that the frontiers can be now delimited on international maps. But, this is as far as Russia will go. Demarcation should only be applied—as it was in the USSR—to the "external frontiers" of the CIS. Chernomyrdin, whose views have

been echoed by other Russian officials, said that “demarcation is out of the question” because it is being imposed on Ukraine and Russia by the West.

To some extent this is true. Ukraine cannot make good on its rhetoric in favor of aspiring to sign an association agreement with the EU and then become full member of the EU if it has not demarcated its 2,000-kilometer-long eastern border with Russia (the 2,600-kilometer western border was mainly demarcated in the Soviet era). But, this is not the only reason why Ukraine has unsuccessfully pushed for demarcation. Ukraine’s elites have always steadfastly defended their sovereignty and territorial integrity and to them borders remain a symbol of this sovereignty.⁴⁸ Lukashenka believes Belarusians and Russians to be members of one former Soviet/eastern Slavic family and therefore he agrees with Russia that there is no need for border demarcation within the CIS and, particularly between the eastern Slavic states.

To accept Russia’s division of borders in the CIS into delimited “internal” and delimited-demarcated “external” ones would be to accept a status of only partial sovereignty. Thirty thousand migrants enter Ukraine each year because of its transparent border with Russia. The security of the Russian–Ukrainian border cannot be therefore resolved without demarcation, the then secretary of the National Security and Defense Council Yevhen Marchuk said.

As is common with Russian officials who like to speak on behalf of the CIS, Chernomyrdin claimed that not going ahead with demarcation was by “mutual agreement.” This is not the case. Ukrainian Foreign Ministry First Deputy State Secretary Volodymyr Yelchenko responded by saying demarcation is an integral part of the legalisation of national borders.

Nevertheless, after the ratification of the Ukrainian–Russian treaty in 1998–1999, Russia continues to rule out taking the next logical step; namely, border demarcation. Delimitation of the border was settled by 2003 except for the Azov Sea, which Russia wants to maintain as a common lake. Demarcation would, in Russian eyes, represent a “permanent” breaking apart of Russians and Ukrainians into two separate peoples, which its national identity finds difficult to accept.

National Identity and Ukraine’s Virtual Foreign Policy towards Russia

Since Kuchma’s re-election in November 1999, the election of Russian President Putin and the removal of Borys Tarasiuk as Foreign Minister in October 2000,⁴⁹ oligarch groups in eastern Ukraine have unofficially revised Ukraine’s 1993 foreign policy concept with “To Europe with Russia!” Andriy Derkach, son of the disgraced former chairman of the Security Service and a leading member of the Dnipropetrovsk-based Labor Ukraine oligarch clan, headed the inter-faction group ‘To Europe with Russia!’ in the 1998–2002 parliament.

The placing of Ukraine’s fate in the same boat as Russia’s is compounded by the foreign policy ideology of President Kuchma, who reinforces the stereotype of

Ukraine as a “Little Russia.” Ukraine—according to the official view—can only “rejoin Europe” together with Russia. In Kherson in February 2002 President Kuchma added that “it was a great mistake to orient only towards the West and fence ourselves off from Russia.” Kuchma also signed a decree in March 2002 to commemorate in 2004 the 1654 Treaty of Periaslav that led to Ukraine’s eventual absorption into Russia.⁵⁰

“To Europe with Russia!” goes together with the pessimistic view that “Nobody is waiting for us in the West,” a slogan that Kuchma first aired in his 1994 election campaign. The slogan is self-serving, since Kuchma and his oligarch allies are unwilling to undertake the necessary steps in domestic reform and establishing the rule of law to rejoin “Europe.” Obviously, it is easier to blame the West or “Europe” for not “inviting us” than it is to find fault with one’s own domestic policies.

Ukraine’s never clearly defined “multi-vector” foreign policy was confusing enough and a product of an ambivalent national identity. It was only short term and had little to do with promoting the national interest, former President Leonid Kravchuk complained.⁵¹ The addition of “To Europe with Russia!” indicated that not only was Ukrainian foreign policy merely a tool to react to short-term changes (i.e. “multi-vectorism”), but, worse still, Ukraine was meant to operate only under Russia’s wing in the same manner as when it was a “younger brother” in the Soviet era. To this is added a lack of self-confidence and national pride when Kuchma says, “Ukraine cannot make any progress without Russia.”⁵² The result is a virtual foreign policy that is waffly and ambiguous.

“To Europe with Russia!” deepened the Russophile view among both Western Europeans and Russians that Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians should be indeed treated as one group, something that Kyiv had long complained about. In the mid 1990s the Council of Europe initially insisted that Russia and Ukraine could only join together. Now, the West is insisting both join the World Trade Organization (WTO) at the same time. As a Ukrainian newspaper lamented, “After similar statements, Ukraine is not treated very seriously in the world.”⁵³

Although “To Europe with Russia!” has come under attack from former Foreign Minister Tarasiuk, now a member of Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine, and even from former President Kravchuk⁵⁴ of the oligarch Social Democratic Party united (SDPU-o), it has remained the cornerstone of Kuchma’s “Little Russian” foreign policy. President Kuchma, former Foreign Minister Anatoliy Zlenko, then head of the presidential administration and the For United Ukraine bloc Volodymyr Lytyyn, and chairman of the State Committee for the Military-Industrial Complex Volodymyr Horbulin constantly repeat “To Europe with Russia!” in different variations.⁵⁵ Lytyyn became parliamentary chairman in May 2002 and therefore Kuchma’s foreign policies could now become those of the Ukrainian parliament.⁵⁶

For historical reasons, Kuchma’s “Little Russianism” is more pro-statehood than Lukashenka in Belarus; nevertheless, Ukraine’s leaders too cannot envisage their country outside the Russian sphere of influence, and Moscow will always remain far

more important to them than Brussels and Washington.

Russian President Putin, unlike his predecessor Boris Yeltsin, does not question Ukraine's independence; he was the first Russian leader to attend Ukraine's annual independence celebrations on its tenth anniversary in 2001. The more pragmatic Putin approaches Ukraine differently to Belarus, since he understands that Ukraine will not follow the Belarusian path of negating sovereignty. At the same time, Kuchma's "Little Russianism" is also not in favor of full independence outside Russia's orbit. Such a commonwealth, or even confederation, closely resembles the Union of Sovereign States option favored by Russian leaders when the USSR had *de facto* ceased to exist after August 1991. One of the first decisions by the new pro-Kuchma government in May 2001 was to demand visas and foreign passports for all CIS states from 1 January 2002—except, that is, for Russia and Belarus, whose citizens can still use domestic passports when travelling to Ukraine.

"Little Russianism," like "multi-vectorism," is a reflection of an amorphous and confused national identity and hence of an inability to choose between Europe and Eurasia, a desire for the best of both worlds.⁵⁷ Centrists in Ukraine cannot decide whether to go west or east because to go to Eurasia would be to lose sovereignty to Russia while to go to Europe would require them to undertake the reforms that would undercut their control of the economy and, by default, society. Consequently, as former President Kravchuk complained, Ukraine lacks a "national concept" (ie, idea) underlying its domestic or foreign policies which, anyway, does not exist.⁵⁸

If Ukraine were to join the Eurasian Economic Community it would bring it back within the Russian sphere of influence, since Russia controls 40% of the votes, which means that "Russia has a clear advantage over the other members," the Moscow-based *Vremya* said.⁵⁹ *Vremya* also believed this was why countries preferred to look to the EU, where, as in NATO, all members have equal votes regardless of their size or GDP. Eurasian and European integration are obviously based on different precepts.

In December 2001 President Kuchma complained that the West still perceived Ukraine "as the Soviet Union or a part of it," which, he said, was wrong because Ukraine was now an independent state. "To Europe with Russia!" and Kuchma's foreign policy based on an amorphous national identity reinforces the view Ukraine is a "Little Russian" part of Eurasia, not an independent state within "Europe."

Conclusion

The amorphous national identities of the three eastern Slavic states coupled with the continued domination of post-Soviet ruling elites by former *nomenklatura* "sovereign communists" turned centrist oligarchs have exacerbated the virtuality of Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian foreign policies. This leads us to three conclusions.

Firstly, it has made it difficult for Russia to accept Ukraine and Belarus as legitimate independent states and thereby to fashion foreign policies towards them as

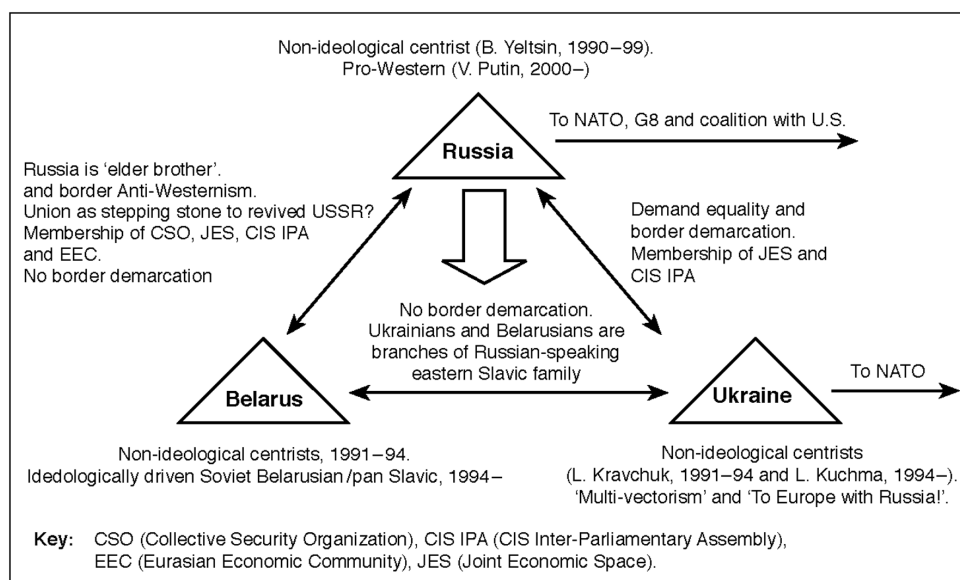
“foreign” countries. This has had ramifications in many areas, such as border demarcation and defense of Russian speakers.

Secondly, it has prevented the Russian–Belarusian union from being fully established. Although an ideological commitment existed from the Soviet Belarusian Lukashenka, it was impeded first by a waffly centrist (Yeltsin) and then by a pro-Western leader (Putin). Yeltsin never took the union seriously while Putin is more interested in cooperation with NATO and the U.S.

Finally, although Ukraine had a stronger ethnocultural national consciousness than Belarus, this was never as strong as in the three Baltic states. Since December 1991 Ukraine’s elites have been dominated by “sovereign communists” turned waffly centrist oligarchs who have been unable to decide whether to orientate towards Europe or Eurasia and have attempted to camouflage this indecisiveness by calling their foreign policy “multi-vectorism.” “To Europe with Russia!” was added to this already confusing foreign policy so as not to offend Russia.

By mid 2002 the amorphous national identities of all three eastern Slav states had led to virtual foreign policies. Russia was moving with Ukraine westwards to the E.U. and NATO. Russia was also moving eastwards with Belarus in the revamped Collective Security Organization and with Belarus and Ukraine in the successor Eurasian Economic Community the Joint Economic Space (JEC) created in September 2003. As long as national identities in all three countries remain ambivalent and ill defined, their foreign policies will also be virtual and indecisive.

Appendix



NOTES

1. See Taras Kuzio and Marc Nordberg, "Nation and State Building, Historical Legacies and National Identities in Belarus and Ukraine: A Comparative Analysis," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, Vol. 26, Nos 1–2, 1999, pp. 69–90, and T. Kuzio, "History, Memory and Nation Building in the Post-Soviet Colonial Space," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2002, pp. 241–264.
2. See Taras Hunczak, ed., *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977) and P. P. Tolochko, V. A. Smoliiy, V. F. Verstiuk, Yu. M. Hamretsky, B. V. Ivanenko, Yu. Yu. Kondufor, S. V. Kulchytsky, YE. P. Shatalina, O. I. Shus and L. V. Yakovleyeva, eds, *Ukrainska Tsentralna Rada. Dokumenty I Materialy, Vols 1 and 2* (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1996 and 1997).
3. See Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia. Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953–1991* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), Vera Tolz, *Inventing the Nation. Russia* (London: Arnold, 2001), Stephen Eke and T. Kuzio, "Sultanism in Eastern Europe. The Socio-political Roots of Authoritarian Populism in Belarus," *Europe–Asia Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3, 2000, pp. 523–547, and Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine: Coming to Terms with the Soviet Legacy," *Journal of Communist Studies & Transition Politics*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 1998, pp. 1–27.
4. See Stephen Shulman, "The Cultural Foundations of Ukrainian National Identity," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 6, 1999, pp. 1011–1036.
5. David G. Rowley, "Imperial versus national discourse: the case of Russia," *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol.6, Part 1 (January 2000), pp. 23–42.
6. Vera Tolz, "Rethinking Russian–Ukrainian Relations: A New Trend in Nation-Building in Post-communist Russia," *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2002, pp. 235–253.
7. Mark Beissinger, "Elites and Ethnic Identity in Soviet and Post-Soviet Policies," in Alexander J. Motyl, ed., *Post-Soviet Nations. Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 150.
8. Dominique Arel points out that the real pro-European forces in Ukraine are nationalists and national democrats: "In an intriguing way, democratization, economic reforms, and national identity in Ukraine are symbiotically linked." See his "Kuchmagate and the Demise of Ukraine's Geopolitical Bluff," *East European Constitutional Review*, Vol. 10, Nos 2–3, 2001, p. 59. See also Taras Kuzio, "Nationalism and Reform in Belarus and Ukraine," *RFERL Poland, Belarus, Ukraine Report*, 21 May 2002. This link is also true in other post-communist countries. See Z. Sabic and M. Brglez, "The National Identity of Post-communist Small States in the Process of Accession to the European Union: The Case of Slovenia," *Communist and Post-communist Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2002, pp. 67–84.
9. See Nancy Popson, "The Ukrainian History Textbook: Introducing Children to the "Ukrainian Nation," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 2001, pp. 325–350, and Serhii Plokhyy, "The Ghosts of Pereyaslav: Russo-Ukrainian Historical Debates in the Post-Soviet Era," *Europe–Asia Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 3, 2001, pp. 489–505.
10. *Versiya*, No. 1, 2002.
11. See Alexander J. Motyl, *Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality. Coming to Grips with Nationalism in the USSR* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 161–173, and Anatol Lieven, "The Weakness of Russian Nationalism," *Survival*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 1999, pp. 53–70.
12. See Veljko Vujacic, "Historic Legacies, Nationalist Mobilization and Political Outcomes in Russia and Serbia: A Weberian View," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 6, 1996,

- pp. 763–801. See also T. Kuzio, “Russians and Russophones in the Former USSR and Serbs in Yugoslavia: A Comparative Study of Passivity and Mobilization,” *RFERL East European Perspectives*, Vol. 5, Nos. 13, 14, 15, 2003.
13. See T. Kuzio, “National Identity and Civil Society in Ukraine: Explaining the Yushchenko Phenomenon,” *RFERL Newslines*, 30 January 2002.
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 17. Stephen Rapawy, *Ethnic Reidentification in Ukraine, IPC Staff Paper 90* (Washington: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997).
 18. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 10 July 2001.
 19. Fournier, *op. cit.*, pp. 415–433.
 20. See T. Kuzio, “Russian Nationalism Comes under Attack in Ukraine,” *RFERL Newslines*, 7 February 2002.
 21. Tor Bukkvoll, “Off the Cuff Politics—Explaining Russia’s Lack of a Ukraine Strategy,” *Europe–Asia Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 8, 2001, p. 1142.
 22. *Ibid.*, p. 420. See also similar criticisms of the use of a catch-all Russophone label by Lowell Barrington, “Russian-Speakers in Ukraine and Kazakhstan: ‘Nationality,’ ‘Population,’ or Neither?” *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2001, pp. 129–158.
 23. See T. Kuzio, “Russia Continues to Disrespect Ukrainian Sovereignty,” *RFERL Newslines*, 9 May 2002.
 24. *Vedomosti*, 23 March 2001.
 25. T. Kuzio, “Will Lukashenka Survive as Putin Loses Interest in Union with Belarus?” *RFERL Newslines*, 16 July 2002.
 26. Haran, *op. cit.*, p. 582.
 27. *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 3 July 2001.
 28. *Delovoy Mir*, 18 December 1997.
 29. *RFERL Newslines*, 1 December 2000.
 30. *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 18 April 2000.
 31. Belarusian TV, 11 May 2002.
 32. *Belapan News Agency*, 15–17 March 1999.
 33. *RFERL Newslines*, 1 December 2000.
 34. *Ibid.*
 35. See Victor Chudowsky and T. Kuzio, “Does Public Opinion Matter in Ukraine? The case of foreign policy,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3, 2003, pp. 273–290.
 36. Belaplan, 1 January 1999.
 37. *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 23 May 1998.
 38. *Interfax*, 30 July 1999.
 39. *Respublika*, 6 July 1999.
 40. *Yantarnyi Krai*, 2 September 1999.
 41. Clelia Rontoyanni, *A Russian–Belarusian “Union-State”: A Defensive Response to Western Enlargement?* Working Paper 10, 2000, One Europe or Several? (Brighton: University of Sussex, 2000).
 42. *Obshchaya Gazeta*, 8–14 May 1997 and *Rabochaya Tribuna*, 14 March 1997.
 43. Bukkvoll, *op. cit.*, p. 1145.

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44. *Ibid.*, p. 1152. Roman Solchanyk takes a different approach to Bukkvoll and this author by accepting all Russian statements towards Ukraine at their face value and thereby ignoring their lack of implementation and their relationship to a virtual foreign policy. See his *Ukraine and Russia. The Post-Soviet Transition* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).
45. Kuzio, "Russia Continues to Disrespect Ukrainian Sovereignty."
46. See T. Kuzio, "Antinationalist Campaign to Discredit Our Ukraine," *RFERL Poland, Belarus, Ukraine Report*, 9 April 2002.
47. *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 14 February 2002.
48. See T. Kuzio, *Ukraine. State and Nation Building* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 100–116.
49. One of Putin's first requests to Kuchma was to have Tarasiuk removed (Bukkvoll, *op. cit.*, p. 1155).
50. See T. Kuzio, "Ukraine's Pereiaslav Complex," *RFERL Poland, Belarus, Ukraine Report*, 7 May 2002.
51. *Den'*, 21 May 2002.
52. ITAR-TASS news agency, 20 February 2001.
53. *Ukraiina moloda*, 12 December 2001.
54. *Den'*, 21 May 2002.
55. (Kuchma), *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 12 February 2002 and *Forum*, 16 May 2002; (Zlenko) *UNIAN*, 21 December 2001; (Lytvyn) *UNIAN news agency*, 14 February, *Zerkalo Nedeli*, 23 February–1 March and *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 26 March 2002; (Horbulin) *Zerkalo Nedeli*, 27 October 2001.
56. See T. Kuzio, "Belarusianization or Europeanization? Postelection Ukraine Struggles to Define Its Future," *RFERL Newslines*, 24 May 2002, and "Loser Takes All: President Kuchma Coopts Parliament," *RFERL Newslines*, 30 May 2002.
57. See Kataryna Wolczuk, "History, Europe and the 'National Idea': the Official Narrative of National Identity in Ukraine," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 2000, pp. 671–694, and T. Kuzio, "Identity and Nation Building in Ukraine. Defining the 'Other,'" *Ethnicities*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2001, pp. 343–366.
58. *Den'*, 21 May 2002.
59. *Moscow Vremya*, 14 May 2002.