

## Ukrainian army: a starting point for the next wave of reforms

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## **Die ukrainische Armee: Ausgangspunkt für die nächste Reformwelle**

Bericht des BIOst Nr. 30/1998

### **Kurzfassung**

#### *Vorbemerkung*

Die Ukraine könnte sehr wohl ein stabiler demokratischer Staat mit den gleichen Werten wie die meisten der entwickelten europäischen Demokratien werden und in der europäischen Sicherheitsarchitektur eine entscheidende, stabilisierende Rolle spielen. Die Fähigkeit der Ukraine, Ereignisse auf der internationalen Bühne zu beeinflussen, hängt aber untrennbar von ihrer inneren Stabilität ab. Es ist allerdings nicht klar, ob die Ukraine die Hindernisse auf dem Weg ihrer inneren Entwicklung überwunden hat und der demokratische Fortschritt unwiderlich geworden ist. Bei genauerem Hinsehen erkennt man, daß die Situation sich durchaus auch verschlechtern könnte. Um Chris Donnelly zu zitieren, "das Problem ist von einem solchen Ausmaß, daß man sich wundern muß, daß es noch nicht zu größeren sozialen Unruhen gekommen ist". Unter diesen Umständen ist es sehr wichtig, zu analysieren, was die Streitkräfte für die ukrainische Gesellschaft bedeuten könnten – einen stabilisierenden Faktor oder eher einen Auslöser für Konflikte. Dieser Bericht untersucht den Stand der ukrainischen Streitkräfte in der Gesellschaft, führt die Ergebnisse der Meinungsumfragen zur 'militärischen Stimmungslage' an und beschreibt ein, allerdings extremes, Beispiel für die Beziehungen zwischen der Armee und einer gewissen politischen Partei der Ukraine. Die Untersuchung basiert auf einer Anzahl von offiziellen Verlautbarungen, auf Meinungsumfragen unter Offizieren wie auch Fachleuten sowie auf ukrainischen, russischen und westlichen Quellen.

#### *Ergebnisse*

1. Die Analyse des gegenwärtigen Zustands der ukrainischen Streitkräfte zeitigt eine recht klare, wenn auch grausame Diagnose: die Armee steckt in einer tiefen Krise, in einigen Bereichen ist die Entwicklung sogar rückschrittlich. Die Führung des ukrainischen Staats, und vor allem des Militärs, muß sich mit dieser Diagnose auseinandersetzen, ihre Schlußfolgerungen daraus ziehen und dann gut koordinierte Bemühungen darauf richten, einen 'kreativen' Kanal zu schaffen. Dies scheint größeren Erfolg zu versprechen, als wenn man zu beweisen versuchte, daß es überhaupt keine Krise gebe, daß alles nach Plan gehe, um dann über den chronischen Mangel an finanziellen Mitteln zu klagen. Wenn sich eine Gesellschaft wandelt und ihre Armee zurückbleibt, dann kann die Kluft für beide, Armee und Gesellschaft, sehr nachteilig werden. Einige extremistische Kräfte in der Ukraine kalkulieren die Armee in ihre weitreichenden Zukunftspläne schon jetzt mit ein.

2. Es steht noch lange nicht zum besten um die Beziehungen zwischen den zivilen und den militärischen Behörden in der Ukraine. Aufgrund der tiefen Wirtschaftskrise ist das Land in eine erstaunliche Lage geraten. Auf der einen Seite würden die Bürger auch eine autoritäre (militärische) Führung begrüßen, wenn dies Ordnung und eine starke Zentralmacht bedeutete, obwohl die Militärs vollkommen unfähig sind, die dringenden und komplexen Probleme zu lösen, denen sich die Gesellschaft gegenüber sieht. Auf der anderen Seite wären die Militärs froh über eine zivile Kontrolle (in welcher Form auch immer). Dies würde ihnen "Licht an das Ende des Tunnels" bringen. Eigentlich ist die zivile Führung noch nicht bereit, das Militär ganz einer demokratischen zivilen Kontrolle zu unterstellen. Unter diesen Umständen könnten die Streitkräfte eher weitere Konflikte auslösen, falls die Staatsführung keine echten umfassenden Militärreformen mit erreichbaren Zielen durchführt.
3. Politische Instabilität und der Mangel an einem institutionalisierten Beamtentum schaffen eine Situation, in der hohe und mittlere Behördenvertreter kommen und gehen, ohne System, ohne Kontinuität und ohne irgendwelche langfristigen Ergebnisse zu erwirken. Auf der obersten Stufe fehlt es an Führungsqualität, und Widersprüche finden sich überall. So kommt es auf der mittleren Ebene zu zahlreichen, aber chaotischen und ergebnislosen Versuchen, etwas zu bewegen, während letztendlich das Leiden auf der untersten Stufe nur verlängert wird.
4. Die gegenwärtige Lage, wo 'die Oberen nicht herrschen können und die Unteren nicht länger auf die alte Weise leben wollen', kann nicht ewig so weitergehen. Da zivile Fachleute fehlen und die Zahl der militärischen Experten rapide abnimmt, ist es notwendig, echte Reformen so rasch wie möglich in Gang zu bringen. Die staatliche Führung kann die Einsatzfreudigkeit der Bevölkerung nicht länger ausbeuten, indem sie nutzlose Pläne und Programme produziert, die bei den betroffenen Menschen nur zu Enttäuschungen führen können.
5. Für die ukrainischen Streitkräfte läuft die Zeit rasch ab. Wenn es nicht bald gelingt, die Ziele und (tatsächlichen) Aufgaben klar zu definieren, wenn die (sicherlich begrenzten) Mittel nicht bald zugewiesen werden, so daß ein vernünftiges Entwicklungsprogramm erstellt werden kann, könnte sich die Lage weiter verschlechtern und in einem völligen Chaos enden. Die Ukraine ist dazu verdammt, entweder ein erfolgreiches Ergebnis zu erzielen oder die gegenwärtige Krise in eine unbestimmte Zukunft mit gut vorhersehbaren Folgen zu verlängern.
6. Der militärische Bereich sollte nicht nur den Militärs überlassen werden. In der einen oder anderen Weise beeinflußt er andere Bereiche und ist mit ihnen verknüpft, so zum Beispiel mit Politik, Wirtschaft, Diplomatie, Ökologie, Gesellschaft und Sozialem, usw. Deshalb müssen viele Regierungs- und regierungsunabhängige Institutionen in den Reformprozeß der ukrainischen Militärstrukturen mit eingebunden werden.
7. Ohne einen systematischen Ansatz innerhalb eines einzigen 'Großbild'-Rahmens werden alle zukünftigen Bemühungen fehlschlagen, den militärischen Bereich zu reformieren und

ihn unter eine verlässliche zivile Kontrolle zu stellen. Die Ukraine wird ansonsten nur ziel- und ergebnislos so weitermachen, wie es während der letzten 5-6 Jahre geschehen ist.



## Introduction

What kind of state will Europe get in the future on the territory of current Ukraine? Which way will the state choose? In whose sphere of influence can it fall? On the one hand, Ukraine could become a state, incapable of overcoming its economic and political difficulties, and therefore become a source of additional threats to European countries in terms of drugs, weapons, illegal emigrants, prostitutes, and ecological disasters. On the other hand, Ukraine could very well become a stable democratic state, have the same values as most of the developed European democracies, and play a vital stabilising role in European security architecture. The answers to these questions are of crucial importance to Europe.

The ability of Ukraine to influence events on the international arena is inseparable from the country's internal stability. It is unclear, whether Ukraine has overcome a barrier in its internal development for its democratic progress to become irreversible. On a closer look there are indications that the situation may get worse.

The relationships along the civilian-military axis are still far from optimal in Ukraine. Due to the deep economic crisis, the country has run into an astonishing situation. On the one hand, the civilian population on the whole would welcome even authoritarian (military) leadership with a hope for order and stronger central power, although the militaries are simply incapable of handling the urgent and complex difficulties facing society. On the other hand, the militaries would welcome civilian control (in any form) that would give them 'light at the end of the tunnel'. In reality, the civilian leadership is not ready and therefore does not fully accept democratic civilian control. Using Chris Donnelly's wording, "magnitude of the problem is so great that it is surprising that it has not resulted in greater social upheaval". Under those circumstances, it is very important to analyse what the Armed Forces can represent for the Ukrainian society – a stabiliser of the situation or a detonator of the conflict.

The analysis of the current state of the Ukrainian Armed Forces gives quite a clear though cruel diagnosis – deep crisis and even some regression in certain spheres. This estimation is clearly visible at several levels – from journalists, from MPs, from civilians, and from the military. The Ukrainian leadership must agree with such a diagnosis in order to draw certain conclusions and to direct its well co-ordinated efforts into a creative 'channel'. This would appear to be more productive than trying to justify a postulation that there is no crisis at all; that things are going according to one's plan; while complaining about the chronic lack of financial resources. If a society transforms and its Army lags behind, the gap might become detrimental for both the Army and the society. The results of the opinion polls (among both the officers, and the experts) support the conclusions.

This study is devoted to analysing the different aspects of civil-military relations and defence reform in Ukraine. The paper contains an introduction, a main part (subdivided into three sections), and a conclusion. The main part of the study deals with the current state of Ukraine's Armed Forces in the society, presents the opinion polls' results to reflect the 'military mood',

and gives one (rather extreme) example of a relationship between the Army and a certain political party in Ukraine.

The essential message is that time is running out fast for the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Unless the clarification of objectives, definition of (real) missions and tasks, allocation of (certainly limited) resources are accomplished soon, leading to a rationally-based (real) programme for development, then the situation will disintegrate into total chaos. Ukraine has the opportunity of obtaining either a successful result, or prolonging the current crisis into the indefinite future with quite predictable consequences. It seems, that some recent positive developments in Ukraine have created a situation where there is more demand for and more acceptance of logical and reasonable proposals, ideas, and concepts.

Obviously, the military sphere should not be left in the hands of just militaries. One way or another it affects and is influenced by many other spheres, such as political, economic, diplomatic, ecological, social, societal, etc. Therefore many governmental and non-governmental institutions must be involved in the process of reforming the military sphere. This involvement should take place according to a single method (procedure, methodology) in order that these common efforts be most effective in terms of a final result.

Contributions of others to the completion of this study are gratefully acknowledged. I owe my greatest debt to Prof. Peter M.E. Volten, Dr. David Greenwood, and Dr. Joost Herman for their support of the research. I want to express my appreciation to my colleagues from the Centre for European Security Studies, who helped me with the bibliography and made a number of helpful criticisms: Margriet Drent, Theo Postma, Sipke de Hoop, and Janneke Westendorp. I also thank my friends Elena Herman, Sergei Malkin, Leonid Polyakov, and Mykola Sungurovskiy for their valuable suggestions for the improvement of the manuscript. Finally, I thank my wife Liuda for her patience and very active support of my study.

## **Chapter 1. The Consequences of the Failure**

A pessimist is simply a better-informed optimist.

### ***1.1 Current State: Armed Forces in Society***

The MOD reshuffle, a lack of feasible programme of reforms, unsuccessful experience with civilian Defence Ministers and the crisis in society on the whole – all these and other factors determine the current state of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Ukrainian experts were asked to define the order of priority of all different factors influencing the status of the Armed Forces in society and estimate their rating.<sup>1</sup> The absolute majority of them have found the index of combat readiness as the most significant for the evaluation of the Armed Forces' current state. It is difficult to disagree, since the criterion is rather complex

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<sup>1</sup> For more details see: Problems of the Armed Forces and the Military-Industrial Complex of Ukraine and Civilian Control over Their Activities, Report of Ukrainian Centre for Peace, Conversion and Conflict Resolution Studies (Kiev 1996).

and (to a certain degree) integrates all other issues. Following combat readiness, next on the list is the social security of the servicemen. This index stresses an urgent necessity to take active measures to improve the servicemen's status. Both of these criteria correlate with one of Jeffrey Simon's requirements with respect to 'restoration of military prestige and accountability of the Armed Forces'. Without positive changes in these spheres, all ideas of civilian control over the military will remain theoretical, and existing legal potential for its development will remain rather idle. Let us first explore the issue of combat readiness.

### *1.1.1 Combat Readiness<sup>2</sup>*

There is no point in a country maintaining a military structure that is not combat-capable when needed.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the taxpayers must know what the Government spends their money for and for what reason such a huge military structure is maintained. Let us compare a few statements of the Government officials on the issue.

Defence Minister Valeriy Shmarov, May 1995: "I say to the whole of the Ukrainian people that the country's Armed Forces are ready to defend the sovereignty and independence of our state."<sup>4</sup>

Defence Minister Valeriy Shmarov, December 1995:

Four years ago, Ukraine embarked on the road of an independent sovereign state. This period of time is very short for the creation of any Army; however, we can already now state that the Ukrainian Army is capable of fighting and is ready to fulfil the tasks assigned to it.<sup>5</sup>

Defence Minister Colonel General Olexandr Kuzmuk, December 1996:

The Army keeps its military potential on the level necessary to prevent any aggression and to protect Ukraine and its people. The Navy is already capable of fulfilling serious combat tasks and to protect Ukrainian national interests in the Black Sea area.<sup>6</sup>

MOD Inspector General (and former Defence Minister) General of the Army of Ukraine Vitaliy Radetsky, March-November 1996:

The existing system of command and control does not conform to operational tasks, and the social and legal support for the servicemen and the members of their families is at a low level. The prestige of military service has fallen to a critical state as a result, the system of military-patriotic indoctrination is imperfect, and the legal foundation for defence issues does not meet

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<sup>2</sup> Based on classified data, the military professionals use different quantitative indices to evaluate the combat-readiness level. Since the paper is based on open sources, rather qualitative and 'verbal' indices are being used.

<sup>3</sup> Donnelly, 'Defence Transformation', NATO Review, p.3.

<sup>4</sup> Speech by Defence Minister Valeriy Shmarov during VE Day ceremony in Kiev, Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in Ukrainian, 0700 GMT 9 May 1995, FBIS-SOV-95-090.

<sup>5</sup> Defence Minister's speech, Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in Ukrainian, 1900 GMT 2 December 1995, FBIS-SOV-95-232.

<sup>6</sup> Colonel General O. Kuzmuk, 'Destiny of the Army Is Inseparable from the Destiny of the State', Kiev URYADOVYY KURYER in Ukrainian, 5 December 1996, p. 5.

the contemporary requirements of the Armed Forces.<sup>7</sup> The prestige of military service is falling, the morale among the military staff is deteriorating, and combat training is being curtailed. It is very problematic to maintain weapons and equipment ready for combat and to modernise them.<sup>8</sup>

Member of the Parliamentary Defence and State Security Committee (and former Head of MOD Main Personnel Directorate) Lieutenant General Olexandr Ihnatenko, April 1996: "The current state of the Armed Forces of Ukraine does not fully conform to the tasks that are assigned to it."<sup>9</sup>

Chairman of the Military Strategy Department, Ukrainian Armed Forces Academy (and former MOD Inspector General) Lieutenant General Olexiy Lavrenyuk, November 1995:

Will lieutenants who have never had a chance to command a full strength platoon acquire the necessary foundations for a military career? What can one say about the professionalism of an Army Corps Commander, a Military District Commander, a Land Forces Commander or even a Chief of the General Staff if none (!) of them throughout his whole military career has ever had an opportunity to lead even regimental level field exercise. To predict some kind of breakthrough in this area in the near future would be, at the very least, unprofessional.<sup>10</sup>

Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine President Leonid Kuchma, 13 December 1996: "None out of 191 mechanised and tank battalions, and ... only as few as 3 out of 45 Air Force flying squadrons are combat ready."<sup>11</sup>

As one can see, these are the quotations of the people that certainly have access to all the necessary data and whose duties are (were) directly related to the Armed Forces. It is needless to analyse these rather contradictory statements. Obviously, just their comparisons themselves – in context of the previous material of the paper – makes one wonder. The military leaders always refer to the only excuse and that is the lack of financial resources. And right they are, although only to a certain extent.

Indeed, financing is one of the main problems confronting the Armed Forces. In 1996, the defence budget received just 8 per cent of what it needed to cover the Army's minimal needs and just 5 per cent of what it actually needed for combat training.<sup>12</sup> Problems of paying salaries to servicemen, supplying them with foodstuffs, paying for the electricity, gas, basic

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<sup>7</sup> General of the Army of Ukraine V. Radetsky, 'Problems of Building the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Context of the National Security of the State', Kiev NARODNA ARMIYA in Ukrainian, 26 March 1996, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> General of the Army of Ukraine V. Radetsky, 'Ukraine's Military Security', Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian, 21 November 1996, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Lieutenant General O. Ihnatenko, Olexandr, 'How To Meet Mobilisation Requirements: Some Views on the Issues of Manpower Acquisition for the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Training of Militarily Trained Reserves', Kiev NARODNA ARMIYA in Ukrainian, 5 April 1996, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Author's interview with Lieutenant General Olexiy Lavrenyuk, Kiev, 29 November 1995.

<sup>11</sup> L. Kuchma, 'Ukraine Does Not Need Funny Armed Forces, It Needs of Full Value Army', Kiev URYADOVYY KURYER in Ukrainian, 17 December 1996, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Ukraine's new Defence Minister Olexandr Kuzmuk: The Minister Hits the Bull's Eye, Lviv ZA VILNU UKRAYINU in Ukrainian, 23 July 1996, p. 1, FBIS-SOV-96-148.

commodities, and housing are acute for the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Listing his priorities, Defence Minister Olexandr Kuzmuk said:

We need to considerably improve the provisions with funds, so that people would enjoy warmth in winter and the soldiers' table would offer them an entire assortment of food. Then there will be combat readiness, skills, and everything else.<sup>13</sup>

It is suggested<sup>14</sup> that in 1997 the Armed Forces will get approximately H1.5 billion (US \$ 776. million). It means about US \$15. per capita, or 1.35% of the Ukrainian GDP, or 4.1% of the state budget. Looking at the MOD estimates, this level of funding retains the Armed Forces on the level of 212,000 militaries and 22,100 civilians (today they have about 370,000 militaries and 150,000 civilians). The Ministry of Defence can afford either to pay 100% of salaries and buy 40 % of food supplies, or provide 5 ... 20 % of other basic needs for the Armed Forces (including building only 400 new apartments for the officers, which is 0.6% of the needs). The table below shows the trend in defence spending in Ukraine since 1992.

Fiscal Year	Defence Budget, % GDP
1992	2.40 %
1993	1.57 %
1994	1.46 %
1995	1.80 %
1996	1.90 %
1997	1.35 %

Moreover, on 3 March 1997, Minister Kuzmuk declared that this level of financing is maximal (in terms of the state's possibilities) and should be considered in the Armed Forces as the norm for at least two more years.

Since the President, in his aforementioned 13 December 1996, speech singled out the Air Force units as the only combat-ready ones, let us add a few more figures to his rather qualitative evaluation. Major General Oleksandr Voloshenko, Deputy Commander of the Air Force, presented the figures on the combat readiness of the air flying units:

852 flight shifts with total flying time of 44,500 hours were made during the year, but the planned flying time was achieved only by military-transport aviation. Even that was only at the ex-

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> This open information was presented by the Government to the Parliamentary Defence Committee members on the eve of the budget draft review. The same data can be also found in other sources (Colonel V. Muntiyany, *Defence Economy of Ukraine*, National Institute for Strategic Studies Press, in Ukrainian (Kiev 1996); V. Kovalskyy, 'What Does New Budget Prepare for Us?', *Kiev NARODNA ARMIYA* in Ukrainian, 14 December 1996, p. 2). As Minister Kuzmuk admitted, these figures do not consider the pensions for the retired militaries.

pense of collaboration with private air companies that are engaged in the commercial activities. The values for the performance of weapons-delivery flights were even lower. Only eight per cent of the planned bombing runs were made, for example, and just five per cent of the ground-target strafing runs. The Air Force was allotted a fifth of the aviation fuel it required, and the units only got only 17 per cent of what was needed for the motor vehicles supporting the flights.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, most of the pilots receive no systematic flight training and on average they have less than 10-15 hours per annum (150-200 being the minimum to maintain competence). Indeed, a pilot who does not fly stops being a pilot, no matter how much time he spends on training using simulators. By the same token, what kind of training will a driver-mechanic obtain without fuel during theoretical classes?

Given the lack of resources, it is easy to explain the numerous shortcomings in most of these fields of military activity; but not in all of them. There are cases, when one needs little or no additional money to get a specific result, and vice versa: in some cases inability to make the 'right' decision does not allow to save or even earn money for the Armed Forces. For instance, according to President Kuchma, for the last few years over 2,500 pilots (who could serve years and years according to their age and health) left the Armed Forces.<sup>16</sup> It requires about US \$400,000. to prepare a fighter pilot in Ukraine. Therefore, the Armed Forces have lost US \$1,000,000,000. It is more than they nowadays spend for the whole year (US \$776,000,000.) for all services! Poor living conditions have forced the pilots to leave the Armed Forces. Obviously, it would have been much 'cheaper' to build an additional 2,500 apartments (for about US \$50 million) to keep those pilots in service. Thus, it is rather common sense and not money, which the leadership lacks. The irony of it is, that 'if a country spends 1.6 per cent of its GDP on defence, and can only field two battalions of competent troops, then by doubling the percentage of GDP spent will not be seen as a credible solution.'<sup>17</sup>

Every country must (learn how to) survive, live and progress within its own resource limitations. Experts believe that in the Ukrainian case the lower the defence budget is the earlier the Defence Ministry will be forced (by the realities of life) to look for new ideas, new leaders, and new approaches. It is difficult to disagree with Russian expert Dr. Rogov, who wrote:

Opponents of the military reform argue that there is no money to effectively conduct the reforming. But it is precisely this fact – lack of money – that explains why we need to reform such an expensive 'machine' as the Armed Forces are. There is no need for reform when resources and means match.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Report by Lieutenant Colonel N. Lysytsya, 'Results of the Training Year: The Air Force Is Training, Reforming and Being Preserved', Kiev NARODNA ARMIYA in Ukrainian, 14 December 1995, p. 2. In 1996 the situation was basically the same. To draw certain conclusions, one needs a comparison. Back in the 1980s the author served as a maintenance group chief in one of the Soviet Air Force regiments. This regiment alone made about 22,000 hours of flying time annually.

<sup>16</sup> Kuchma, 'Ukraine Does Not Need...!', Kiev URYADOVYY KURYER , p.3.

<sup>17</sup> Donnelly, 'Defence Transformation...!', NATO Review, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> S. Rogov, 'State Security and Military Reform', Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian, 23 November 1996, p. 3.

The Army today is beset by a myriad of problems. There are structural and organisational problems that inhibit combat readiness and capability and, above all, socio-economic problems that are exercising a disastrous influence on officering, manning, training and morale.<sup>19</sup> The military reform, of which Defence Ministers and top military officials have talked so much since 1991, has resulted in nothing reasonable (at least in the opinion of 74% of 1003 officers and generals polled on the subject in April 1996).

In general, it is questionable if the Armed Forces of Ukraine in their current state can sustain even low intensity operations over a prolonged period, to say nothing about their ability to fight in a major war. Fortunately, there is no real military threat for Ukraine on the horizon. In such a favourable situation the leadership must do its best to build not "funny Armed Forces, but ... a Full Value Army". This objective is established by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, i.e. the President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma.

### *1.1.2 Military Prestige and Social Security for the Servicemen*

Why do young Ukrainians try to avoid the conscripted military service in the Armed Forces? Why do Ukrainian officers leave the same Armed Forces, before even earning the military pension? What about military prestige in Ukrainian society? To answer these questions let us present the results of the opinion poll conducted in April 1996 among the officers themselves.<sup>20</sup>

Prestige of the Armed Forces in Society	Percentage
Very high	0%
High	1%
Middle	8%
Low	35%
Very low	53%
No answer	3%

This is a starting point. It is also the result of the previous policy. The prestige of the military service has been tumbling down dramatically for more than ten years, i.e. since the Gorbachev era. First, because the 'perestroika' propaganda portrayed the military as a burden for society. Secondly, because the incidents in the late Soviet period – such as in 1989 in Tbilisi where the Armed Forces were used against civilian crowds – damaged the reputation of the military when it was forced to take blame for the incident instead of Gorbachev and other (ir) responsible politicians. In fact, due to the diminished prestige, in late 1980's the

<sup>19</sup> This is a diagnosis given by Charles Dick for the Russian Army, which has problems of similar origin.

<sup>20</sup> Ukrainian Armed Forces: Current State and Problems of Reforming, Report of Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Research in Ukrainian (Kiev 1996) , p.44.

number of people enrolling in the military institutes dropped significantly. Therefore, in the former USSR and during the initial period of Ukraine's independence all and sundry were accepted to the military institutes of higher learning.<sup>21</sup>

The Armed Forces of Ukraine have run into a rather contradictory situation. On the one hand, there is an abundance of officers in comparison with other categories of personnel. According to the MOD Main Personnel Directorate, there are more than 100,000 officers – almost one officer for every two soldiers – in the Ukrainian Armed Forces.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the correlation between officers and the rank-and-file is approximately 1:2. Such a state of affairs does not occur in any 'normal' army.<sup>23</sup> Because of the economic crisis, the discharge of officers who are entitled to a pension and the provision of housing are being delayed and dragged out for no reason. As the Defence Minister put it:

This is a quite complex process, since we are doing everything by means of reduction, while neglecting probably the most important thing – the social problems of servicemen. We currently do not have an opportunity to carry out active reform in the Armed Forces, because we cannot provide our people with housing or work.<sup>24</sup>

As a result, the Armed Forces face the overloading of higher levels of the personnel structure. For this reason, the advancement of mid-level specialists is coming to a halt. Young officers are losing the confidence and incentive to serve. Indeed, about 7,000 very qualified specialists are reported to have left prematurely, only last year.

On the other hand, officer recruitment and retention have become the serious problems. The military leadership believes, there is a lack of officers in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. According to Major General Petro Pyatibrat, Head MOD Main Personnel Directorate, only 81% of the officer positions are filled in the Armed Forces.<sup>25</sup> In 1996, the shortfall in officer numbers was almost 20,000 overall, with about 7,000 at junior officer levels. Obviously, based on the annual number of about 4,000 young lieutenants graduating from the military schools, it is impossible to make up for this deficit, even if all of them are motivated to serve.

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<sup>21</sup> Ukrainian Armed Forces will face the consequences very soon; in the author's view, in two to three years. By then most of lieutenants-85 will become lieutenant colonels, i.e. the officers who (according to their level) must prepare and develop all the necessary plans, concepts, strategies, and decisions both in the General Staff and in the MOD.

<sup>22</sup> Strength, Makeup of Armed Forces Detailed, Kiev INTELNEWS in English, 0220 GMT 16 August 1995, FBIS-SOV-95-159.

<sup>23</sup> Analysis of the correlation was carried out by the author based on the open sources from different countries. In fact, most of armed forces have 1:5 ... 1:7 ratio (on the whole). In some services, for instance, in the US Marine Corps, it is even higher – about 1:9. In this sense the Ukrainian Armed Forces are 'unique'. Unfortunately, proper military training is impossible under those circumstances.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Ukrainian Defence Minister Valeriy Shmarov: I Do Not Serve But Work in the Army. I Tell All Generals This, Kiev UKRAYINA MOLODA in Ukrainian, 11 November 1994, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> M. Kaminsky, 'Main Personnel Directorate Has Not Simply Important Tasks – This Is a Destiny for Officers and Soldiers', Kiev NARODNA ARMIYA in Ukrainian, 19 February 1997, p.1.

Thus, at the end of 1996 President Kuchma had to admit, that "... our Armed Forces have no system of training, selection and promotion of officers."<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, the military institutes are not attracting high quality people. Although the applicants have reached the required levels, many are more attracted by the prospect of a 'free' education rather than to serve for a long period. Many of them leave the military as soon as possible: about 20% (those who just wanted to escape conscription by doing a year and a half as cadets) leave before commissioning and as many as 20-25% young lieutenants<sup>27</sup> leave the Armed Forces during the first couple of their service years. It seems that the situation is currently changing for the better. In 1996 an average of 3.5 candidates competed for every seat in Ukraine's military institutes.

Living standards for officers have deteriorated drastically. The pay is so low that a fighter pilot is still paid less than a city-bus driver. Ongoing delays in paying allowances have become a widespread phenomenon. Moreover, the officers in the Armed Forces are paid considerably less than the same officers in the Security Service and in the Border Troops, for example. Housing is another grievance: the number of 'homeless' officers still remains at 71,000.

To keep the Armed Forces combat capable and combat ready, the officers must not be occupied with thoughts only on how to survive. They must also upgrade their proficiency, and not only during command and staff exercises when, according to Army wiseacres, a commander of a regiment attacks with a flag in his hand. Ukraine has modern equipment but mileage resources are limited. The Army is short of fuel and spare parts; research and development are hindered by lack of money. Manning problems have grown to the point at which the Armed Forces cannot neither maintain their existing posture, nor implement any reforms. Units are fully occupied with routine maintenance and with working for the civilian economy in an attempt to make ends met.

The morale in the Armed Forces is dire. The material conditions are dreadful for most of the officers. They are getting their salary with a 2...5-month delay. About 70% of the officers are homeless and will remain in this situation for ... 50+ years, if the state continues the current tempo of building new apartments. Last year polls showed, that 85 % of Ukrainian officers were discontent with their lot and 67 % of younger ones want to quit the Armed Forces.

Those officers not sunk into apathy and disillusion are divided on the future direction of the service and, increasingly, between those who are cynically profiting from the crisis and those who struggle to make ends meet and act professionally.<sup>28</sup>

Premature voluntary retirement of more capable officers and recruitment problems are visible symptoms of the generally low morale, which is not solely a product of a disastrous decline in material conditions. Psychological factors are at least as important. Once cherished by

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<sup>26</sup> Kuchma, 'Ukraine Does Not Need...!', Kiev URYADOVYY KURYER, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> With 'free' bachelor's or even master's degree.

<sup>28</sup> Dick, *A Bear Without Claws* (Surrey 1996).

society, officers now feel rejected by it. Matters are also complicated by the fact that an opinion of the Army as an unnecessary burden is gradually taking shape within society. Public opinion has great power. All of this is undermining the desire of officers to be seriously occupied with their profession, and weakening their fighting spirit and readiness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of common interests. According to the opinion poll conducted by the Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Research, every third officer, would not repeat his choice of the military profession (including 40% of the officers on platoon level, 36% – on company level, 34% – on battalion level, and 41% – on regimental and divisional level).

To be objective, there are also some signs, that social problems in the Armed Forces are beginning to be resolved in a much better manner. For instance, in October 1996 President Kuchma equalised the salaries of civil servants and military personnel. This problem has both political and moral aspects. The word 'officer' means a state servant. Meanwhile, salaries of civil servants in Ukraine were much higher than those of military men. Hopefully, in future the servicemen and officers will occupy a decent position in Ukrainian society. Nowadays officers' salaries total US \$120-250 and the military personnel receive a rations' allowance. The state also spends US \$400-500 per month on every cadet.<sup>29</sup>

Apart from this, some of the steps taken by the leadership should have been given better thought. For instance, on 27 July 1996, the President signed a decree broadly reorganising the executive branch of the Government. According to the decree, the (State) Committee for Social Protection of Servicemen, headed by Major General Vilen Martyrosyan, was liquidated. Its functions were re-deployed to the Defence Ministry. When the decree was released, General Martyrosyan resigned from his position.

Since 1991 the Committee has been created as a body not subordinated to the Ministry of Defence, which allowed it to fight against abuses and law violations by the defence authorities. The latter tried to subordinate the Committee, but its chairman was strong enough to withstand their attacks. The Committee often requested the cancellation of unfair resolutions, and it gave information on the improper disposal of military property directly to the Cabinet of Ministers. Of course, the Ministry of Defence was not so happy with this state of affairs. On the other hand, the Committee staff absorbed some of the unrest among the servicemen caused by the drastic decline in their living standard. General Martyrosyan had few allies and avoided back room dealing. He suspects that it was not the Committee itself that was meeting with such strong opposition, but it was directed at him personally. And so he resigned.

Given the current situation in the Armed Forces and lack of 'free' media readily capable of addressing the problems confronting the servicemen, some would prefer to keep the Committee as an additional source of information for the Government and as a window in order to 'let the

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<sup>29</sup> Makeup of Armed Forces Detailed, Kiev INTELNEWS in English, 0220 GMT 16 August 1995, FBIS-SOV-95-159. The growing popularity of military education is to a certain extent, a result of the fact that one can acquire a civilian profession in the military institutes. This phenomenon is visible, particularly in the military institutes located in large cities, such as Kiev, Kharkov, or Odessa. This way the parents also 'hide' their children from compulsory service in the Armed Forces.

steam out' for the militaries and their family members. This is a situation in which one saves less than one could gain.

Reform of the Armed Forces is inseparable from the reform of economic, political and other state systems. More and more politicians understand the importance of doing something instead of only talking about reforms in Ukraine. Yuriy Buzduhan and other leaders of Ukrainian Social Democratic Party appealed to President Kuchma with a request to launch (immediately) real reforms in the country:

Today not just the course of reforms, but also social peace and harmony in society and the very existence of the state are under the general threat of collapse. Life itself inexorably demands that an end be put to the pseudo-reform phraseology, which just covers up the dangerous experiments staged on the people and on the economy of our country. A new political course of reforms must be based upon realistic and pragmatic steps.<sup>30</sup>

Indeed, the reform of the Armed Forces requires the same transition from 'pseudo-reform phraseology' to 'realistic and pragmatic steps'. The Army today expects more than trifling handouts and verbal assurances of the constant concern of Ukrainian leadership over an improvement of the material welfare of the servicemen. The militaries expect general understanding of and political consensus on the role and place of the Armed Forces in Ukrainian society; on missions and tasks of the Armed Forces, on their present and future within agreed upon resource limitations. They also expect social programmes of financial, housing and social adaptation of the servicemen, and a fundamental review of world-outlook stereotypes of standards for the upkeep of troops in a market-type society.<sup>31</sup> The state leadership must understand, that further demoralisation could transform the Ukrainian Armed Forces into an uncontrollable institution which in its turn could destabilise the society.

## **Chapter 2: UNA-UNSO Onslaught: Who Loves the Army More?**

Current economic difficulties, priorities of the current administration, and a policy of depoliticising the Armed Forces have resulted in near absolute indifference to the needs of the militaries on the part of political parties and movements. An absolute majority of politicians has even stopped 'flirting' with the servicemen, which they used to do during the first years of independence.

Viewed against this background, the very different standpoint of the Ukrainian National Assembly – Ukrainian National Self Defence (UNA-UNSO)<sup>32</sup> looks extremely vivid. This party

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<sup>30</sup> Appeal by Ukrainian People's Deputies, Members of the Social Democratic Party, to Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian, 19 July 1996, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> The Programme 'To Raise the Prestige of the Military Service', developed by a group of Ukrainian Parliamentarians led by Major General Volodymyr Mulyava and co-ordinated with the appropriate state structures, is of interest on this plane.

<sup>32</sup> UNA-UNSO stands for Ukrayins'ka Natsional'na Asambleya – Ukrayins'ka Natsional'na Samo-Oborona. The Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA) is a political umbrella for the Ukrainian National Self Defence (UNSO).

has always paid close attention to the issues of military development. However, its attitude towards the Armed Forces has undergone significant changes within a short period of time.<sup>33</sup>

Just two years ago UNSO leader Dmytro Korchynskyy wrote in his 'Destabilisation Doctrine': "Men in uniforms are pigs. Shooting at them is legitimate".<sup>34</sup> The organisation fought with the Army, which it treated as one of the pillars of the power pyramid. However, the state's inadequate attention toward the resolution of the pressing problems in the Army has led to a dramatic build-up of social tension in the military circles. The standard of living of officers is so low that it abuses their dignity. A social problem has thus become a political one.

A deep analysis of the situation in the Army gave grounds for the UNA-UNSO leadership to conclude that "most officers are becoming personally opposed to the ruling regime. Instead of representing the nation, they are becoming a destabilising factor". UNSO officials believe that other armed structures – the Interior Ministry, the Security Service, the Border Troops, and the National Guard – are absolutely happy with the current situation. They are the 'system's beloved child and ready to protect the hand that 'feeds' them. Only the Army – separated from the state's 'golden teat' – is (in their view) ready to support UNA-UNSO ideas'.

The organisation does not have illusions regarding the Ukrainian Armed Forces' combat-readiness and believes that attempts have failed to create an Army from fragments of the Soviet Army. UNSO officials have a very low opinion of the professional skills of Ukrainian officers. However, regarding servicemen as a strong and organised reserve in the 'future fight for power', the UNA-UNSO made agitation in the Army one of its priority tasks.

The primary goal of the UNA-UNSO is to split the officers' corps by separating lower rank officers from the higher echelon of command. Various methods are used, including direct threats issued to the leadership in the Defence Ministry. For instance, the UNA-UNSO has announced that it is collecting data on crimes committed against Ukraine by the Armed Forces' higher command. As the first warning, they have presented Defence Ministry officials with a book in a grey cover. The same book in a red cover is said to be the last warning. This kind of book has already been received by Colonel General Ivan Bizhan, First Deputy Defence Minister. The UNA-UNSO claims that Bizhan was a member of the USSR State Committee for State of Emergency, who escaped to Ukraine after the Committee's failure in 1991 and is doing everything to ruin the Ukrainian Army. Grey books have also been sent to other Generals, among them: Vasyl Sobkov, Deputy Defence Minister-Land Forces Commander; Dmytro Rudkovskyy, Head of the MOD Main Construction and Housing Directorate; Hryhoriy Mykhaylychenko, Deputy Defence Minister (Logistics); Hryhoriy Kukharskyy, Head of the MOD Main Financial-Economic Directorate; and Volodymyr Sytnyk, Head of the MOD Social-Psychological Service. Ukrainian media has carried numerous reports on the aforementioned officials' machinations involving military property.

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<sup>33</sup> Y. Kovalenko, 'You Can Hear the Thunder of Boots: Martial Remarks From Ukraine's West', Kiev MOST in Russian, No. 3, 23-29 January 1995, pp. 4-5; H. Kublanov, 'UNSO-lisation of the Armed Forces Is Approaching', Kiev VECHIRNIY KYIV in Ukrainian, 29 October 1996, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Y. Kovalenko, 'You Can Hear the Thunder ...', Kiev MOST, p.4.

The UNA-UNSO is actively undertaking measures to create a negative image of the Ukraine's top brass. Attempts are being made to convince officers that the leadership in the Defence Ministry is unprofessional and dishonest. Every case of corruption among the senior command is inflated to the dimensions of a national catastrophe and invariably ends in generalisations, such as 'they are all the same'. This practice produces effects. For instance, on the eve of a big meeting of Kiev garrison officers held in June 1996, UNSO members disseminated numerous leaflets among the personnel of the military units with stories about the construction of luxurious cottages and garages for members of the Defence Ministry Board, carried out from defence budget funds. As a result of the wave of indignation that followed, the assembled servicemen demanded the immediate dismissal of all Defence Ministry Board members, including the Defence Minister himself. One of the leaflets disseminated at the meeting read:

You may continue to curse your command and authorities during your cigarette breaks. You may remain homeless and do odd jobs to make an additional penny. You may, however, join the UNSO and stand up for your rights.<sup>35</sup>

An application form for joining the organisation was printed on the reverse of every leaflet. Around 1,000 leaflets were disseminated among officers. It is remarkable that not a single torn leaflet was found on the floor after the meeting.

It is typical, that, among the great number of political parties and movements, the UNA-UNSO is probably the only organisation that tries to carry out real propaganda among the Army personnel. Moreover, by doing that, it divides the personnel into categories and varies its methods depending on those categories: officers, veterans, active service personnel, or members of their families. For each category the organisation publishes a different kind of leaflet: soldiers are promised the reduction of active service to 12 months; officers are promised the resolution of their housing problem and higher allowances reaching \$600 per month; soldiers' parents are told that their sons will serve close to home; and members of servicemen's families are promised free education at the universities. Of course, the promises are purely demagogic in nature. However, they win the servicemen's sympathies: first, because they reflect their expectations; and secondly, because other parties do not promise them anything at all.

It is worth mentioning the UNA-UNSO's ever more frequent attempts to initiate direct dialogue with the Armed Forces' creative elite. Namely, from this perspective, that one should view the nation-wide conference entitled 'From the Armed Forces to Ukrainian National Army' held in Kiev in 1996.

It should be admitted that military experts were shocked by the draft Military Doctrine developed by the UNA-UNSO that views future wars as active terrorist campaigns. The Doctrine views Chechen military formations as a prototype of the future Armed Forces. It envisions the abolition of all military ranks and the introduction of equal wages. Nevertheless, the UNA-UNSO does not seem to be discouraged by the bewilderment on the part of Defence Ministry

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

strategists. So far, the organisation is very content with the attention it receives from the Army elite.

The UNSO is concentrating its attention on the Army's young generation that tends to glorify UNSO members' scandalous behaviour both in Ukraine and beyond its borders. The UNA-UNSO states: "We want it all, and we want it now!" These energetic appeals do not call for patience and 'accord'. They call for resolute action, which attracts young people. The recently observed significant increase in the number of UNA-UNSO members among cadets of military institutes is alarming. For instance, quite a large UNA-UNSO organisation has been set up in the Kiev-based Air Force Institute.

The influx of officers into the UNA-UNSO is hampered by the fact that servicemen's participation in any political organisation is prohibited. The establishment of the 'Military Unity' independent trade union of servicemen under the UNA-UNSO's auspices is an attempt to bypass the law banning the activities of political parties in the Armed Forces. The new trade union has its largest organisations in Donetsk, Kirovohrad, Mariupol, and Poltava regions. More than 200 career officers have joined the trade union in Lviv alone. This is approximately the same number as that of Ukrainian Officers' Union members (in Lviv). It is significant that the red star has become the independent professional union's symbol. More than reflecting the essence of the professional union's activities, this symbol demonstrates its attempt to take advantage of the nostalgic sentiments of a great number of officers. It should be added that officials of the independent professional union maintain close contacts with the Union of Soviet Officers led by Stanislav Terekhov. Lieutenant Colonel Vitaliy Chechylo, the trade union Chairman, has been elected a Presidium Member of the Union of the Soviet Officers Executive Committee.

The UNA-UNSO leadership is convinced that the low social status of the servicemen pushes them towards fighting the current state system. Therefore, the organisation officially aims at increasing the political activity of the servicemen through their fight for social rights.

The UNSO did everything to persuade the Homeless Servicemen Committee of the Kiev Garrison into staging an officers' meeting. It also insisted on picketing the Cabinet of Ministers building. The UNA-UNSO orchestrated the picketing of the Defence Ministry building by soldiers' mothers after Oleksandr Zatynayko, the Chief of the General Staff, addressed the Parliament with a proposal to abolish soldiers' leaves, justifying it by the lack of funds to cover transportation costs.

In essence, the extremist UNA-UNSO looks down on the people in uniform, yet it continues to repeat: "Only the UNA-UNSO loves the Army. All the others – including the Ukrainian Government – hate it". UNSO members are trying to convince the men in uniform that the nation has not forgotten them. The only difference is that instead of Government offices and political parties' headquarters, the voice of the nation is now heard from the UNSO's mouthpieces. This organisation alone epitomises the nation's respect for the Army. In its numerous appeals to the people, the organisation insists that its primary goal is to revive such notions as the officer's honour, dignity, and respect on the part of the people.

In June 1996, the protest action staged by Kiev Garrison servicemen became very significant. The servicemen reacted with whistles to the arrival of Lieutenant General Dmytro Rudkovskyy and of Major General Hryhoriy Kukharskyy. Meanwhile, the audience listened attentively to the speech by UNA-UNSO leader Dmytro Korchynskyy and gave him an ovation at the end. The UNA-UNSO's pressure on the Armed Forces as the weakest element of state power is yielding very tangible results. The well-planned onslaught of propaganda by this extremist organisation fills the vacuum in Army circles.

The longer Ukrainian leadership continues its endless random reforms in the Armed Forces, the more likely the UNA-UNSO is to succeed in filling the vacuum. On the other hand, one can foresee much higher interest of the public and other political parties in fighting for the same 'vacuum' very soon.<sup>36</sup> There is a chance to direct their competing efforts at a serious open debate on military issues, by looking for alternative – and what is more important – affordable solutions, instead of empty promises to increase officer's salaries and to abolish conscription by the year 2000.

### **Chapter 3: Opinion Polls: Barometer of the Military Mood**

Civil-military relations have not been seriously tested in Ukraine yet. Fortunately, the Ukrainian military has not been involved in a political struggle yet. The Armed Forces have not been ordered to take part in a military conflict (as the Russian Army had in Chechnya), therefore to draw certain conclusions one can turn to opinion polls as a barometer of the 'military mood'.

Given the current crisis situation in Ukrainian society, competent experts believe, the inclination of executive authorities towards authoritarian methods of leadership is becoming evident. As it is, power structures – including the Armed Forces – are the foundation of any rigid model of power. Therefore, it is very important to analyse what the Ukrainian Armed Forces can represent for society – whether as a stabiliser of the situation or a detonator of conflicts.<sup>37</sup>

Before trying to use the Armed Forces as a stabilising factor, it is useful to clarify to what degree the state leaders enjoy authority among the servicemen and to what degree the latter are ready to take part in settling domestic conflicts. Unfortunately, it turned out that the prestige of the President and the Defence Minister is low among the troops. Expressing their attitude toward the Supreme Commander-in-Chief (the President), every second officer described it as negative, and every third – as absolutely negative. Approximately two thirds of officers negatively assessed the Defence Minister.

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<sup>36</sup> New elections are coming in 1998 (parliamentary) and in 1999 (presidential).

<sup>37</sup> With this aim in spring of 1996 the Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Research and Social Monitoring Centre conducted an opinion poll. In 14 regions of the country 1,003 Ukrainian officers were polled anonymously and voluntarily. The results were presented in: *Ukrainian Armed Forces: Current State and Problems of Reforming*, Report of Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Research in Ukrainian (Kiev May 1996), 51 p.; O. Mykolayeva, 'Servicemen Say: He Who Has Not Been in the Army Has Lost, But He Who Has Been There Has Lost Twice', Kiev ZERKALO NEDELI in Russian, 15-21 June 1996, pp. 1-2.

These figures reflect not only the current state of affairs in the Armed Forces, but also more general problems. The current economic crisis, a high level of corruption and lack of visible success of the present leadership, results in political apathy and leads to alienation from statehood and a negative attitude toward any government in society on the whole. All of this does not only threaten the democratic development of the state-building process but is ridden with far more serious consequences.

Indeed, it is abnormal when the President enjoys the confidence of only 20% of the population, whereas 40% do not trust him at all. The Cabinet of Ministers has got 12% and the Parliament 'only 8% of the confidence vote' respectively. Only the church (41%) and the Armed Forces (34%) have got more confidence.<sup>38</sup>

The Armed Forces constantly get quite a high (often the highest) grade for the 'level of confidence' criterion in comparison with the other state institutions, such as the President, the Government and the Parliament. The level of confidence in the Armed Forces is close to that of the church. On these grounds, most of the experts consider that in future this level will at least remain unchanged (58%) or will even increase (15%). Meanwhile, the President's support will be likely to decline because of the need to undertake unpopular economic steps and because of the unsatisfactory accomplishments of the Government in most fields.

Incidentally, as for domestic threats, the majority of officers consider it to be inadmissible to use the Armed Forces to neutralise social conflicts, mass riots, and other crisis phenomena. After all, in the case of any conflict, for example, between the President and the Parliament – citizens in uniform, too, may be dispatched to the Parliament or the (presidential) administration buildings.

The reasons for optimism about the prospects of the Ukraine's civil society development is the near absolute unanimity about the inadmissibility of the Army's participation in solving internal political problems. Only 8% of the militaries presume such a possibility under certain circumstances on their own initiative. The absolute majority (80%) rules this out.<sup>39</sup> This reflects the Armed Forces' positive tendency to remain beyond the politics even if pushed by the executive branch.

Considering the defence of Ukraine and its territorial integrity to be 'important' and 'very important,' officers nonetheless do not at all identify the state with its leadership. As few as every third officer considers the defence of the President, the Parliament, and the Government against external threats to be an important function of the Armed Forces. The state leadership should also be alarmed by the fact that its foreign policy does not fall in line with the orientation of the officer corps:

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<sup>38</sup> O. Razumkov, 'We Have Not Had a Leader Yet', Kiev ZERKALO NEDELI in Russian, 2 November 1996, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Problems of the Armed Forces and the Military-Industrial Complex of Ukraine and Civilian Control over Their Activities, Report of Ukrainian Centre for Peace, Conversion and Conflict Resolution Studies (Kiev 1996).

Thirty-seven per cent of the officers polled are not against establishing a Russian- Ukrainian- Byelorussian bloc and supporting integration among the Slavic states of the CIS. As few as 12% of them are oriented toward NATO, 8% – toward the Tashkent Treaty, and 41% support Ukraine's non-aligned status. Most officers do not want to participate in peacekeeping operations under the auspices of either NATO, or the Russian Federation. However, 66% of officers accept peacekeeping under the UN mandate. The result of analysing both the moral and psychological situation in the Armed Forces are particularly striking. This concerns primarily the status of servicemen, that has been brought down over the last few years from elite to beggarly.

Currently, only one in every four regular serviceman is satisfied with his service. The difficult material situation of servicemen drives them to the shadow economy. According to the results of the opinion poll, up to two thirds of the officer corps 'eke out their livelihood'. Some servicemen are even involved in criminal activities. Seventy per cent (!) of the officers polled, believe that the uncontrolled sell-out of military property and weapons is one of the most serious problems of the Armed Forces.

There is a sharp rise of pessimism among the Armed Forces. According to the poll, every third officer would not select the profession again. The Army is facing a real threat of losing qualified people. In addition, more than 20% (mainly majors and lieutenant colonels) expressed their wish to leave the Armed Forces if the military leadership is going to put into practice its 'vision' of the Armed Forces-2005.

The opinion poll revealed the lack of reform in the Armed Forces: The absolute majority of officers (74.4 %) are certain, that there is no purposeful reform in the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and their nearly uncontrollable reduction is continuing. The opinion poll also showed that only as few as 4% of officers think, that the Armed Forces are currently able to fully perform their main function – to defend the country. Thus, the global war scenarios, taught to Ukrainian junior and senior officers at the Armed Forces Academy, look ridiculous.

Sitting in classes, Ukrainian officers are rehearsing a situation in which a coalition of western and southern states comprising 50 divisions attacks Ukraine, and the latter counters it alone and employs 30+ divisions. All of this is taking place in a situation in which the Armed Forces are unable to put a single battalion on combat alert in sufficient time. For some reason, the Ukrainian fantasists from the General Staff have failed to consider that the hostile coalition that they depicted would not be possible without the participation of the United States. So is Ukraine trying to measure its strength along with that of the United States?<sup>40</sup>

To bring the authors of these unrealistic scenarios back to earth, one has only to cite a few figures. The United States earmarks more than US \$1,200. per capita for military needs, and Ukraine only about US \$15. Ukraine spends US \$600-700 million on the Armed Forces annually, while in the United States around US \$1 billion is earmarked for the maintenance of one aircraft carrier alone.

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<sup>40</sup> Mykolayeva, 'Servicemen Say', Kiev ZERKALO NEDELI, p. 1.

Sometimes, the top military leaders seem to understand the realities of life. Let us quote, for example, Colonel General Ivan Bizhan:

We need to reject those approaches and views of the objectives and tasks of the Army that existed under the Soviet Union. It is very difficult for many senior officers to move away from the old views, where any tactical assignment is considered on the scale of global strategic offensive operations across a great expanse. We should proceed from the fact that there will not be a situation in Ukraine where all of the nations that surround it will begin to wage war against it simultaneously. The NATO countries with which we are now collaborating, and from which we are receiving a certain amount of financial assistance, will scarcely conceive of waging military operations against us. We thus need to change our views of the tasks of the Armed Forces accordingly.<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand, unfortunately, in most areas of military activities, Ukrainian officers continue to be guided by outdated ideas and decisions of the same leaders that seem to 'understand the realities of life'.

One could argue, it is not 'very difficult for many senior officers to move away from the old views', it is much more difficult for quite a few senior generals to get rid of those old views. It is also due to a lack of real civilian involvement in military planning, in military budgeting, and especially in military education and training. Civilian leadership must recognise the importance of new approaches to military planning and completely new curricula for senior officers training. Moreover, they ought to go through the same (senior level) training with military officers. Until then, Ukrainian Armed Forces are doomed to continue fighting – fortunately on the maps only – global wars with huge coalitions as it currently takes place, despite very smart ideas of their generals (see above) and with their (the same generals') very active participation.

The expert opinion on the sources of the financing of the Armed Forces is rather traditional. The financing of the Armed Forces is an obligation of the state that strives to remain independent and has to do everything for it. At the same time, 27% of military experts count on the market factors. This can be interpreted as a deep disappointment of the military in the state policy rather than existence of real non-governmental sources of Army financing.

Many officers believe that the reform is needed in the sphere of military leadership. There is a need to overcome the excessive centralisation and bureaucratisation of the existing military structure. The territorial commands (Military Districts, Operational Commands) should be given more authority and responsibility, while at the same time raising the commanders' personal responsibility for the state of affairs. Most officers and generals must be in the field, not in the MOD administrative apparatus. The functions of the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff must be delineated as well.

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<sup>41</sup> General Bizhan presented the view during his meeting with Air Forces Board members in the city of Vinnitsa. It was published in a reportage: Lieutenant Colonel N. Lysytsya, 'Results of the Training Year – The Air Force Is Training, Reforming and Being Preserved', Kiev NARODNA ARMIYA in Ukrainian, 14 December 1995, p. 2.

On the whole, the opinion polls reveal a lack of reform in the Armed Forces, their poor combat readiness and a low professional level of military leadership, as well as the dangerous morale and psychological situation. Considering the opinion polls' results and analysis of the current state of the Armed Forces, one has reasons to draw the following conclusions:

- the Ukrainian Armed Forces do not represent full-fledged Armed Forces, able to perform their primary mission;
- real reforms are not being conducted in the Armed Forces, and a foundation for the establishment of qualitatively new Armed Forces is not being laid;
- the stereotypes from the past still prevail among the military leadership regarding military policy, which is preventing, to a considerable extent, the development of a fundamentally new Military Doctrine;
- there is a growing tendency to lag behind modern armies in terms of weapon systems and professional training;
- there are rising negative tendencies deforming servicemen's awareness and the combat spirit;
- social protection of servicemen does not withstand any criticism;
- the Armed Forces are gradually transforming from a stabilising factor into a potentially destabilising force in society.

## **Conclusions**

The Ukrainian Armed Forces face deep crisis and even some backward developments in certain spheres. The Ukrainian state (and especially military) leadership must redirect its efforts from complaining about the chronic lack of financial resources to development of feasible and sustainable reform plans. To assure irreversible transformation of the Ukrainian society on democratic value system, its Army must not lag behind, because the gap might become quite detrimental for both the Army and the society.

Relationships along the civilian-military axis ought to be improved in Ukraine. Because of the deep economic crisis, the civilian population in general would accept any tough measures – including even authoritarian (military) leadership – with a hope for order and stronger central power, although the militaries are absolutely incapable of tackling the complex issues the society faces. On the other hand, the militaries would welcome any form of civilian control that would help them to return prestige and respect of society and to find the balance between the 'military needs' of the society and its ability to provide the necessary resources. It seems, that occupied with other urgent problems civilian leadership is not ready and therefore does not fully accept democratic civilian control. Under those circumstances, the Armed Forces can become a detonator of a conflict.

Given the permanent political perturbation and lack of an institutionalised civil service, high and middle level authorities come and go, producing no continuity and no sound results from

the long-range perspective. Lack of clear guidance and contradictory goal-setting at the top level lead to endless chaotic attempts at the middle level and to the prolonged suffering at the bottom level.

The current fragile balance when 'upper stratum cannot rule and lower stratum does not want to live in the old way any longer' cannot last forever. Given the lack of civilian experts and sharply decreasing number of military experts, Ukraine must start (real) reforms. The state leadership ought to clarify the Armed Forces' objectives, define their (real) missions and tasks, allocate for them the corresponding (certainly limited) resources, and provide strong and persistent leadership through all the reform stages. Otherwise under certain circumstances the situation may disintegrate into one of total chaos.

It would be a big mistake to leave the military sphere in the hands of just people in uniform. Through different channels it affects or is influenced by other spheres of society's life, such as: political, economic, diplomatic, ecological, social, etc. It is natural, that most governmental and many non-governmental institutions must be involved in the process of reforming Ukraine's military structure.

Without a single framework – well substantiated and based on science and successful experience of other countries under similar circumstances – all future efforts to reform Ukraine's Army and to establish reliable civilian control over it are doomed to fail. Ukraine must not continue the fruitless defence reform effort it has already tried for the last 5-6 years.

**Anatoliy S. Grytsenko**

## **Ukrainian Army: A Starting Point for the Next Wave of Reforms**

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### **Summary**

#### *Introductory Remarks*

Ukraine could very well become a stable democratic state, have the same values as most of the developed European democracies, and play a vital stabilising role in European security architecture. The ability of Ukraine to influence events on the international arena is inseparable from the country's internal stability. It is unclear, whether Ukraine has overcome a barrier in its internal development for its democratic progress to become irreversible. On a closer look there are indications that the situation may get worse. On the other hand, the militaries would welcome civilian control (in any form) that would give them 'light at the end of the tunnel.' Using Chris Donnelly's wording, "magnitude of the problem is so great that it is surprising that it has not resulted in greater social upheaval." Under those circumstances, it is very important to analyse what the Armed Forces can represent for the Ukrainian society – a stabiliser of the situation or a detonator of the conflict. The study deals with the state of Ukraine's Armed Forces in the society, presents the opinion polls' results to reflect the 'military mood', and gives one (rather extreme) example of a relationship between the Army and a certain political party in Ukraine. The research is based on the number of official references, results of the opinion polls (among both the officers, and the experts), on Ukrainian, Russian, and Western sources.

#### *Findings*

1. The analysis of the current state of the Ukrainian Armed Forces gives a quite clear though cruel diagnosis – deep crisis and even some backward developments in certain spheres. The Ukrainian state (and especially military) leadership must agree with such a diagnosis in order to draw certain conclusions and to direct its well co-ordinated efforts into a creative 'channel'. This seems to be much more productive than just trying to justify a postulate that there is no crisis at all; that things are going according to one's plan; and complaining about the chronic lack of financial resources. If a society transforms and its Army lags behind, the gap might become quite detrimental for both the Army and the society. Some extreme political forces of Ukraine already count upon the military in their far-reaching future plans.
2. Relationships along the civilian-military axis are still far from optimal in Ukraine. Because of the deep economic crisis, the country has run into an astonishing situation. On the one

hand, the civilian population on the whole would welcome even authoritarian (military) leadership with a hope for order and stronger central power, although the militaries are absolutely incapable of handling the urgent and complex difficulties facing the society. On the other hand, the militaries would welcome civilian control (in any form) that would give them 'light at the end of tunnel.' In reality, civilian leadership is not ready and therefore does not fully accept democratic civilian control. Under those circumstances, unless real full-scale military reform with feasible objectives is initiated by the state leadership, the Armed Forces can become a detonator of a conflict.

3. Political instability and lack of an institutionalised civil service provoke a situation when high and middle level authorities come and go, producing no system, no continuity and no results in the long-run. Lack of clear guidance and contradictory wording at the top level lead to numerous chaotic and unsuccessful attempts at the middle level and in the final analysis – to the prolonged suffering at the bottom level.
4. The current state of affairs when 'upper stratum cannot rule and lower stratum does not want to live in the old way any longer' cannot last forever. Given the lack of civilian experts and sharply decreasing number of military experts, there is an urgent need to start (real) reforms as soon as possible. The state leadership simply cannot exploit enthusiasm any longer by producing useless plans, programmes and spreading disappointment among the people involved.
5. Time is running out fast for the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Unless the clarification of objectives, definition of (real) missions and tasks and the allocation of (certainly limited) resources are accomplished soon, leading to a rationally-based (real) programme for development, then the situation may disintegrate into one of total chaos. Ukraine is doomed either to get a successful result, or to prolong the current crisis into the indefinite future with quite predictable consequences.
6. The military sphere should not be left in the hands of just militaries. One way or another it affects and is influenced by many other spheres, such as: political, economic, diplomatic, ecological, social, societal, etc. Therefore, many governmental and non-governmental institutions must be involved in the process of reforming the military structure of Ukraine.
7. Without a systematic approach within a single 'big picture' framework all future efforts to reform the military sphere and to establish reliable civilian control over it are doomed to fail. Ukraine can either continue the fruitless way it has already gone for the last 5-6 years.