CHAPTER VI
UKRAINIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS RUSSIA AND COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (CIS)
Chapter VI

UKRAINIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS RUSSIA AND COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

The collapse of the Soviet Union changed the rules of Ukraine – Russian relationship in several ways. Their relationship suddenly moved into the unfamiliar setting of ‘foreign policy’, and contradictions brewed over a wide range of issues. During the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk, problem ranging from international debt repayment to energy supply, from the future of the Black Sea Fleet to the division of former Soviet property, from the shape of the CIS to the control and ownership of nuclear weapons marked the center stage of Ukraine – Russian relationship, and these unresolved problems dominated their bilateral relations in the ensuing period. For Ukraine, the renunciation of all ties with Russia and a new westward orientation became major factors for strengthening its own identity. In spite of varying causes of threat that are perceived in Ukraine, Russia was viewed as a serious security threat to Ukrainian independence, and integration into the European Union certainly was seen by Ukrainian commentators as a very attractive prospect. But the geopolitical realities compelled Ukraine not to isolate itself completely from Russia. Eastern Ukraine favors a stronger relationship with Russia, and more importantly the impeding economic crisis in Ukraine also called for better relationship with Russia. As Ukraine was faced with the urgent task of preserving and consolidating its only economically feasible trade and industrial links, first of all with Russia, a realistic assessment of the Ukrainian economic situation called for a more pragmatic foreign policy agenda.

With the coming to power, President Leonid Kuchma in contrast to his predecessor redrew relations between Russia and Ukraine from confrontational idealism to economic pragmatism, and his realistic approach to foreign policy marked a new era in Ukraine-Russia relationship. The endorsement of pragmatic approach in Kiev was matched by a remarkable change of attitude in Moscow. At the end of Ukraine’s third year of independence, Russia was forced to accept the reality that Ukraine was developing into a fully sovereign state. As Ukraine represents an area of Russia’s vital
interests, it also tried to establish with Ukraine, relations of a stable, conflict free and mutually non-provocative cooperation as an alternative to a competitive partnership. Ukraine also no longer looked upon economic cooperation with Russia and CIS as an unfortunate necessity but as an urgent requirement, and for getting economic resources from Russia, Ukrainian leaders softened their policy on Crimea and the BSF. Soon it became an associate member of CIS Economic Union and the willingness of Kuchma to stay engaged in the CIS enabled Ukraine to continue in obtaining economic resources from Russia. The signing of the treaty of “Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership” between Ukraine and Russian Federation on 31 May 1997 solved the dispute over the Black Sea Fleet, and became an important landmark in the ties between the countries opening up ‘a new age in the history of Ukraine – Russia relationship’ and laid a firm foundation for further development of mutually beneficial cooperation.

In due course of time, because of lack of economic reform, when the availability of Western economic resources decreased, Ukraine came closer to Russia. Their relationship also strengthened further when Ukraine increased its participation in the CIS Anti-Terrorist Center, and appointed Viktor Yanukovych a pro-Russian as Prime Minister in November 2002. In spite of the conflict over a wide range of issues of economic, political and most notably security issues, the two largest successor states of Soviet Union, Russia and Ukraine managed to sort out their differences, and overall, Ukraine-Russia relationship remained positive and less confrontational compared to the period from 1994 to 2004.

Despite Ukraine’s fear of an imperial Russia, nationalists’ strong opposition to develop close relations with it, and its desire for Euro-Atlantic integration, Ukraine managed to develop good relations with Russia. Thus, here in this chapter an attempt will be made to analyze Ukrainian foreign policy towards Russia and CIS from the prospective of the existence of fear factor, differences and commonalities of interests and the prospects of better relationship. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the Ukrainian concerns over Russia as a security threat from a historical prospective. The second part analyses the differences and commonalities of interests
between Ukraine and Russia, and the prospects of cooperation. The third part inclusively deals with Ukraine’s relations with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

1. Ukraine-Russia Relationship and the Existence of Fear Factor: A Historical Prospective

Before and after independence Ukraine’s relations with Russia are always guided by the fear factor, as Ukraine perceives Russia a threat to its independent existence. The Ukrainian historical memory of Pereyaslav, which led to a long series of disasters such as the defeat of the Cossack leader Mazepa at Poltova in 1709; the liquidation of independent Cossack institutions later in the eighteenth century; Tsar Alexander II’s Ems Decree of 1876 that banned virtually all publications in Ukrainian; and the Ukrainian famine of the early 1930s, created on Stalin’s order (Morrison 1993: 678), urges them to maintain a distance from Russia. Further, the political behavior of the Russian elites after independence of Ukraine such as lack of adequate respect for Ukrainian independence, territorial claims vis-à-vis Ukraine, direct involvement in numerous nationalistic conflicts inside and outside of its frontier (Alexandrova 1994: 69) also compelled Ukrainian leadership to firmly close their doors to Russia. But the traditional version of Russian history fails to see Ukraine as a separate entity different from Russia. For Russians at best, Ukrainians are ‘younger brothers’, junior shareholders in the Russian empire rather than its victims (Morrison 1993: 680). As Ukraine and Russia view their relationship differently, it is discussed below from both of their prospective.

1.1 Ukraine’s View of the Relationship

Before 1648, Ukraine was part of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth whose eastern frontier extended to the east of the Dnieper River. After the Pereyaslav agreement of 1654, a part of that vast territory (today’s region of Poltova and Chernihiv with the city of Kiev) came under the rule of the Tsar in Moscow, where Ukraine was known as Little Russia and its subjects as Little Russians in the Russian empire. The Tsar in addition to being the autocrat of Great Russia, became the sovereign of little Russia. But Little Russia did not thereby become part of Russia in the modern national sense. This little Russia, which was a kind of a pre-modern or historic Ukrainian Cossack nation, retained...
its own government, laws and institutions for at least a century after its acceptance under
the specter of the Tsar. When the nation building project of Russia called for the
elimination of Little Russia’s separate identity, it was precisely in the final decade of
Little Russia’s autonomous existence that its rights began to be defended in a language
revealing a modern conception of nation (Szporluk 1997: 94).

But, before the Ukrainians put forward their national agenda, the nation and state
building of Russia was already under way, in ways that had ramifications for those whom
we may call the Ukrainian subjects of the empire. Especially in Catherine II’s reign
(1762-1796), St. Petersburg held the view that the elimination of Little Russia’s
traditional institutions was just one element of a larger state and nation building project
and thus required a variety of measures, the main aim of which was to achieve the
complete integration of Little Russia into the Russian state and Russian society (ibid:
94).

The construction of a Russian identity which included the construction of a
national history, built around the idea of a state distinguished by a thousand year long
history was first formulated in connection with Ukraine being incorporated in Russia
after 1654. The corollary of this was to disinherit the Ukrainians from any claim to
historic statehood and there by deny them any future claim to independent statehood
(ibid: 95). The Russians further embellished their history by according later to the grand
principality of Moscow, the claim of sole legitimate and direct successor of Kiev — first by
invoking dynastic and religious arguments and then, in the age of ethnic nationalism, by
claiming an ethnic identity between the modern Russian nation and the state of Kievan
Rus, denying any legitimacy as Kiev’s heirs to other polities that functioned in the post-
Kiev space. As ethnic nationalism intensified throughout nineteenth century Europe, this
operation was carried one step farther. The Great Russians declared to be the real
Russians, while the Ukrainians and Byelorussians were viewed either as a junior branch
of the Russian family or as Russians corrupted by foreign influences (ibid: 96).
This imperial version of the Russian nation which was defined in confrontation with the West had important domestic implications for the status of Little Russian history and society. However, the Little Russia of the age of Catherine was aware, and took pride in the fact, that it was a child of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. Its defenders also asserted their right against the empire by invoking Little Russia’s past ties with the Commonwealth (Struk 1993: 94). Further the construction of a Ukrainian national history that “seceded” from the imperial version of Russian history included the declaration of a link, continuity in political tradition between Little Russia, itself a direct product of the Cossack association with the Commonwealth on the one hand and Kievan Rus on the other.

The defense of Little Russia was expressed in works of literature, in theatre, and in historical, philosophical and other researches. In this regard the Ukrainian national poet Taras Shevchenko’s (1814-1861) role was noticeable as he began to see the political significance of his native culture and nationalized it by making its language a medium artistic expression. In due course of time this literary separatism necessarily implied the political separatism with the idea that of Ukrainian society, a nation matched with that literature. However, the Russians did not understand that Shevchenko represented a qualitatively new state in the formation of Ukraine and the decline of Little Russia. Interestingly enough, as the Ukrainians were operating in the bipolar Russian–Polish world, some Poles were gradually accepting the emergence of a Ukrainian nation but the Russians continued to regard them as their own province. Before long, the Russians began to understand the connection between the Polish and the Ukrainian question, and St. Petersburg concluded that the Ukrainian movement was a product of the Polish plot to dismember the Russian nation. In 1863, the so called Valuyev Ukaz, named after the minister of interior, introduced the first restrictions on the use of the Ukrainian language (ibid: 105). The government which enjoyed the support of a large segment of the public in this respect concluded that the Ukrainian phenomenon was dangerous even though the Ukrainians limited their activities to literary scholarly pursuits in marked contrast to the Poles.
However, the Russian government did not believe that the Ukrainian movement was an expression of any authentic and legitimate aspirations of the population of Little Russia, and chose to treat it as a product of foreign (Polish) “intrigue”. In 1876, the imperial government of Russia went even farther in its identification of Ukrainian language and culture, and in a secret edict signed by the Tsar at Ems, it forbade the publication of Ukrainian writings and the performance of Ukrainian plays and songs. According to Grabowicz, in taking this step the Russian government helped, albeit ironically, to raise Ukrainian literature out of its provincial mode, giving it new fold political import by casting it as something subversive, separatist or proto-nationalist (Grabowicz in Sporluk 1997: 106)

In the twentieth century, when the formation of modern Ukraine got intensified, in the same fashion of the tsarist state, the Soviet occupation had crushed the national aspirations of the Ukrainians characterized by oppression and inhumanity. From the beginning of Russian revolution of 1917 to 1921 (when Russian Communist party control had been established in Ukraine and was active), the period witnessed the Ukrainian war of liberation. Ukraine politically and physically fought for its independence and rights of self determination against the Russian Communist party and Red Army. But the call for Ukrainian independence and separation caused the provisional government and Bolshevik leadership great concern. A reevaluation of the benefits of keeping Ukraine under Petrograd (and Moscow after 1918) jurisdiction meant that there was a strong organized oppositional force in Bolshevik party determined not to lose such a “pearl of Russia”.

In 1922, the situation was such that there was Soviet Ukraine and Polish controlled Western Ukraine, and both these areas were ruled by occupational powers which had used force to get what they wanted and had then signed a treaty with one another giving the appearance that all was in order. The West indirectly acknowledged and ratified this partition and occupation of Ukraine by giving Poland sovereignty over Eastern Galicia in March 1923. Soviet Ukraine on the other hand, was left in 1923 having
signed two union treaties (December 8, 1920 and December 30, 1923) confirming that it was a member of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic.

But it was in fact Stalin who was determined to deny Ukraine its rights of self determination and denied that there was a national question or problem in Ukraine. This denial often supported by use of force, convinced the Soviet leadership that anti-Soviet and counter-revolutionary nationalistic elements in Ukraine were being oppressed to secure the essential well-being of the Soviet Union.

After independence from the Soviet rule in December 1991, Russia’s imperialistic revisionist policies also worried Ukrainians as Russian politicians both in and out of office have either rejected or at least shown insufficient respect for Ukrainian independence (Bukkvoll 1997: 63). The political and cultural elites have found it difficult to accept the notion that Ukraine is actually an independent state and no longer a part of Russia. For many others including Russian vice-President Alexander Rutskoi, Yeltsin’s recognition of the independence of Ukraine has been a betrayal and the loss of Crimea, Sevastopol, Odessa and other areas were unacceptable to the Russians (Morrison: 14). Even if in May 1992 the Russian Supreme Soviet declared the 1954 decision to transfer the Crimea to Ukraine illegal, and in December 1992, the Congress of People’s Deputies empowered the Supreme Soviet to consider the status of Sevastopol. A summer 1994 survey of the deputies in the Russian Duma also revealed that only 3.5 percent thought Crimea should belong to Ukraine (ibid: 70)

The deputy speaker of Russian Supreme Soviet Valentin Agatonov, in 1993 sent the Crimean parliament a letter stating that he was convinced that ‘no tricks or nationalistic babble can tear apart the historical blood-bonds between the people of Russia and Crimea’ (ibid: 70). The most provocative step came on July 1993, when the Supreme Soviet claimed that Sevastopol is henceforth under Russian jurisdiction. So far as territorial integrity and borders are concerned, the Russian position was that it would respect the borders between the two countries, whereas Ukraine wanted the Russians to accept the borders (ibid: 71). Russia has also indicated that borders within the CIS should
be regarded as only administrative guarded with only minimum control and that the borders with non-CIS countries should be guarded by common CIS borders troops. But these are unacceptable and worrisome for Ukraine.

Furthermore, in order to revive its past glory, nationalist Russian politicians and even the Russian legislature tried to keep Ukraine within their sphere of influence by using political, economic and security means. By using the political means, Russia continued to regard the CIS as the way to integrate former Soviet territory, be it in the form of a confederation, federation or a union and decided to become the key element of the CIS. For Russia, the creation of the CIS meant not liquidating the old center but the transfer of that center from Moscow as the Soviet capital to Moscow as the Russian capital (Holovaty in Lena Jonson 1995: 14).

Because of Ukraine’s close links with and economic dependence on the former Soviet republics, especially Russia, and as it wanted to bring crucial socio-economic reforms, which must be carried out in close cooperation with these states, Russia used the economic means to keep Ukraine within its sphere of influence. As eighty percent of Ukraine’s industrial production did not constitute a complete technological cycle inside the country’s boarder (Bukkvoll, 1997: 80) and the majority of the items needed for industrial production came from Russia, and as Ukraine has depended upon Russia for deliveries of oil and gas, Russia has more convenient and flexible foreign policy tool in temporarily stopping or limiting the supplies. Therefore, Ukraine has found itself under the threat of Russia’s suspension of deliveries. In addition to this, the Ukrainian debt to Russia for oil and gas supplied, which has risen steadily since independence has further weakened the Ukrainian position (ibid: 81). For instance in summer 1993 Russia tried to get Kravchuk to give up Ukraine’s share of the Black Sea Fleet in turn for a reduction in the debt, and in 1994, the Russian oil and gas company Gazprom also wanted to take over parts of the Ukrainian pipe-line system in exchange for debt reduction (ibid: 81).

Apart from this, Russia also tried keep Ukraine within its axis through cooperation within the CIS by transforming the CIS Economic Union into a single
Eurasian Economic Space which has provisions to prohibit members of CIS Economic Union to become the member of other countries' economic and custom union. So also, Russia tried to integrate former Soviet territory by forming a military defense union within the framework of the CIS having its self-appointed role of a military policeman of the CIS states (Holovaty in Lena Jonson 1995: 16).

In the domain of culture and language the Ukrainians also feel threatened. Ukrainians of nationalist persuasion worry that both Russia and Western penetration in Ukrainian informational space is excessive and pose a threat to ethnic Ukrainian cultural revitalization. Vasil Lyzanchuk, a professor of journalism at Lviv state university expresses his worriness about the continuing presence of Russia in Ukraine’s informational space. To him,

"Imperial and post imperial means of mass communication ... disgrace the Ukrainian state, its symbols, language culture traditions and customs. In order to demoralize the spirit of national rebirth ... [new Russian chauvinist], hiding behind the principles of freedom of speech and pluralistic thought, foist the thought that the Ukrainian people are disappointed with independence because it was as a result of the disintegration of the USSR that life worsened, the mafia came to power, corruption developed, crime was unleashed to no limit, and a terrible social explosion will soon come" (Shulman 1998: 297).

Another writer fears that Russian informational imperialism in the contest of undeveloped Ukrainian mass media will lead to the ‘erosion of the Ukrainian ethnocultural organism’ and ‘the denationalization’ of Ukraine (ibid: 297). Nationalist party leaders also consistently argued that Russian television, radio and newspapers were ‘anti-Ukrainian’, giving disinformation about the new Ukrainian state and ridiculing its culture and politics. It is not only the allegedly anti-Ukrainian ideas that accompany Russian mass media penetration of Ukraine that are worrisome to Ukrainian nationalists, but the presence of the Russian language itself (ibid: 297). Finally, nationalists believe that Russia, through informational ties with Ukraine, provides ideological and propagandistic assistance to anti-Ukrainian ethnic-Russians living in Ukraine.
The above century old imperial nature of Russia and the post independent (1991 onwards) revisionist imperial attitude of its leaders make Ukrainian leaders to feel threatened. Therefore, despite the formal over through of Moscow’s domination of Ukraine, the perceived threat of neo-colonial political, military, economic and cultural domination over the new Ukrainian state promoted strong resistance towards Russia. Any Ukrainian leader who signs an agreement with Russia is immediately also seen as risking a political surrender of independence on the pattern of 1654. The result is a permanent inferiority complex and a lack of confidence in negotiating with Moscow, and a fear that any deal with Russia is a potential trap, however favorable to Ukraine its terms might appear. In December 1991, when Kravchuk held his first news conference in Kiev after signing the tripartite agreement to establish the CIS largely on Ukrainian terms, he was accused of following in Khmelnytsky’s footsteps and giving away Ukraine’s sovereignty. History tells Ukrainians that promises made by Russia are always broken, which leads to the widespread unspoken assumption that Ukraine is also entitled to break its pledges when it sees fit. Consequently, the Ukrainian debate over nuclear weapons has been dominated by the widespread belief that any security guarantees offered by Russia to a non-nuclear Ukraine will be as worthless as the Tsar promises in 1654. As one commentator in Kiev newspaper wrote:

*With regards to Russian guarantees, we have heard enough fairy-tails. In the course of history, neither the Moscow state nor the Russian empire ever kept any of their promises...the most reliable Ukrainian history studies published in the West testify that developed economic relations and democratic institutions could not guarantee security and did not prevent the Moscow state from enslaving Ukraine after the so-called Pereyaslav agreement in the middle of the seventeenth century (Holets in John Morrison 1993: 680).*

Not surprisingly, the perception of Russia as a potential invader and enemy has made any search for common interests with Moscow exceptionally difficult. Relations with Moscow are perceived as zero-sum game in which any sign of military weakness, or the slightest false diplomatic move, could put Ukraine’s hard-own independent statehood at risk (Morrison, 1993: 680).
Thus as a policy measure, Ukraine firmly closed its doors towards Russia and took a pro-Western orientation in its foreign policy. Keeping in mind the Russian position and intention to dominate in the CIS, Ukraine by insisting on its own independent position did not become a full member of the CIS. Ukraine also did not accede to the CIS Inter-parliamentary Assembly in March 1992 or to the CIS Collective Security Act (The Tashkent Treaty) in May 1992 or to the CIS Charter in February 1993. Finally, distrust of the CIS was formalized as the official Ukrainian strategy in the document ‘Fundamental Guidelines in Ukrainian foreign policy’ adopted by the parliament on 2nd July 1993. This document includes the statement: ‘Ukraine will avoid participation in the institutionalization of forms of multilateral cooperation within the framework of the CIS which might transform the CIS into a supranational structure of a federal or a confederate charter’ (Bukkvoll, 1997: 64).

To extricate itself from the awkward situation of suspend of oil and gas deliveries, Kravchuk tried to reduce its dependence on Russian and signed agreements with Turkey, Iran and Turkmenistan. In order to maintain its independent position, Ukraine only held an associate membership in the CIS Economic Union and in the same fashion it has refused to join any CIS agreement on military integration.

Further, to defend its culture and language from Russian influence a policy of ‘de-Russification’ was implemented internally and policy of weakening its ties with Russia and strengthening ties with Europe was perceived as a signal in the right direction. The nationalists also uphold that integration with Europe will enrich Ukraine’s culture in general, and facilitate the rebirth of ethnic Ukrainian culture in particular.

1.2 Russia’s View of the Relationship
For Russians, the Kievan-Rus state formation (900-1240), is the common heritage for both Russia and Ukrainians. Kiev, the Ukrainian capital was the birth place of the Russian nation. It was here a thousand years ago that the Russians adopted Christianity (Simes 1992: 82), and for them, Kiev is the mother of all Russian cities. But the two nations remained separated for 414 (1240-1654) years due to foreign rule. With the
signing of the treaty of Pereyaslav in 1654, Ukraine became a part of Russia. Pereyaslav was seen by the Russian nationalists as the culmination of a popular Ukrainian desire to reunite with Russia for ever more (Morrison 1993: 681). Thus, the awakening of Ukraine and especially the separatist character of Ukrainian-ness surprised the Russian intelligentsia. In the words of Georgiy Fedotov, "we are never able to understand such type of Ukrainian behavior, this was first of all, because we loved Ukraine, we loved her land, he people, her songs, and we thought that all this was also part of our national heritage. Also, the separatism was incomprehensible to us because we had never really been interested in the three to four centuries of history that had formed the Ukrainian people and their culture different from Great Russians" (Fedotov in Tor Bukkvoll 1997: 61). So also, Ukraine as a separate territorial entity was unimaginable for the Russians in general and Russian nationalists in particular. In the words of Ivan Dzyuba (the Ukrainian writer), who perceptibly noted: those who love Ukraine most of all were the Russian nationalists such as the nineteenth century Slavophile Ivan Aksakov:

"The little Russian question does not exist for the simple reason that this is an all Russian territorial question for the people, for the entire Russian land, concerning equally closely the inhabitant of Penza and Volhynia. Trans-Dnieper Ukraine and Byelorussia are not a conquered land which can be argued about, but a part of the living body of Russia: questions and arguments have no place here" (Dzyuba in John Morrison 1993: 681).

Thus Russians, who can accept the independence of Poland, Latvia or Georgia, feel their identity threatened by the idea of Ukrainian statehood, nationality and even linguistic autonomy (ibid: 681). Therefore, from historical, cultural, and territorial reasons, Ukrainian independence was harder for many Russians to accept. These days Ukrainians and Russians argue where the treaty of Pereyaslav should be interpreted as only a temporary military agreement, or as the natural reunification of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples.

---

1 The treaty was a product of Bohdhan Khmelnitsky’s need of a partner to secure his victory over Poland, as a part of the Cossacks' independent policy, but not the genuine desire of the Ukrainians to be a part of Russia.

As it is discussed above, Ukraine’s relations with Russia in the first four years of its independent existence was fully guided by the fear factor, and the unresolved contentious issues related to borders, territorial integrity, and nuclear assets further contributed to this. However, to remain fully away from Russia was unthinkable on the part of Ukraine as the hugely complicated network of economic, political and military ties were bound with Russia. But the inability to sign a friendship and cooperation agreement that could solve many bilateral problems would not materialize. Talks between the two parties ended from time to time unsuccessfully and broke off due to disagreement over a number of issues. Ukraine’s increasing inability to pay its energy debt also brought about tensions in the bilateral relations as Kiev became extremely troubled when Moscow leveled its gas prices with world gas prices.

Apart from these issues, the existence of contradictions in their approach to various problems oscillated Ukraine Russian relations for a long. But due to their interdependence, both parties however show their interests to normalize relationship. With the coming to power of Leonid Kuchma as President, Ukraine Russian relations moved onto a realistic plane. As Kuchma’s policies reflect his understanding of domestic dynamics and balances, he has been able to reflect his domestic successes to relations with Moscow. Ukraine’s pursuit of Russian economic resources further showed bright prospects and new avenues to strengthen bilateral relations. Kuchma also showed his willingness to move towards more integration with Russia and CIS, but he strongly underlined his opposition to political and military integration keeping in mind Ukraine’s territorial integrity. Thus, Ukraine-Russian relations again continue to evolve around the existence of contentious issues, contradictions and interdependence. These are now discussed below.

2.1. Contentious Issues

From among the contentious issues, the inviolability of Ukraine’s borders, the future of Crimea, Sevastopol and the Black-See Fleet are of prime importance. As the issues were
closely linked with the future relations of Russia and Ukraine, each of these discussed below keeping in mind the intensity of the problems.

2.1 (a) Recognition of Ukrainian Borders

The issues of Russia and Ukraine's land and sea frontiers remain unresolved since independence. In Kiev’s opinion, all of its borders must be established in accordance with the principles of international law, which it asserts would give all borders the ‘same legal status.’ Moscow, in contrast, has not been willing to sign a basic treaty with Ukraine in which Russia renounces all territorial claims and the revision of frontiers. But instead, the Russo-Ukrainian treaty of 1990 has been declared by the Russian side (unofficial so far) to be obsolete, since it had been signed under completely different conditions i.e. at a time when the Soviet Union still existed. In the security guaranties which Yeltsin gave to President Kravchuk during the summit in January 1993, Russia expressed its willingness to respect the frontiers of Ukraine only within the CIS frame. In other words if Ukraine were to withdraw from the CIS someday it would have to expect Russian territorial claims (Alexandrova 1994: 70). Although Yeltsin reiterated Russian willingness to guarantee the security of Ukraine during the meeting between Yeltsin and Kravchuk in June 1993 (Radio ‘Ukraina’ in ibid: 70), the problem continued to remain a pressing issue until the signing of the Friendship Cooperation Treaty in May 1997.

As far as the recognition of borders were concerned, the treaty was seen as a major achievement for the Ukrainians, as the article 2 of the treaty was an unconditional commitment on the part of both parties that they ‘respect the territorial integrity of each other and affirm the inviolability of the borders that exist between them.’ However, despite the apparent success, Ukrainian analysts remained suspicious of Russia’s commitment to respect Ukraine’s territorial integrity for a number of reasons, and by the way two types of border problems were distinguished i.e. land and marine. As far as the 2063 kilometer long land border between Ukraine and Russia was concerned, a number of objections were raised. Although some preliminary discussions have taken place, the actual delimitation of land borders has not taken place as the proposals to resolve the issues had been rebuffed on at least eight to ten occasions by the Russians (Wolczuk
Inevitably, as the issue of demarcation and delimitation was tied to the status of the Black Sea Fleet (BSF), the problems continued to exist until the BSF issue had been dealt with.

As far as marine borders are concerned an equally intractable problem has been the demarcation of the Sea of Azov and the Strait of Kerch. Ukraine insists on treating the former as a territorial sea and negotiating its delimitation separately from the issue of the Strait of Kerch. But the Russians rejected any moves that would remove the sea's internal status, and maintains that both should be recognized as internal water of the two states (Smolansky 2004: 124). Because it was believed by Moscow that such a move would remove barriers to its exploitation by foreign forces (Sherr 1997: 33-34). So, although negotiations were stepped up in 2002, the deadlock persists.

2.1 (b) Status of Crimea, Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet

The extremely complicated nature of the problem regarding Crimea in general, Sevastopol and the main naval base of the Black Sea Fleet in particular, have historical, ethnic, military-strategic and economic importance for both countries. As Russian territorial claims and Ukrainian territorial integrity are involved therein, the Crimean question was a highly volatile issue in the relation between the two countries right from their independence since 1991.

Crimea was an integral part of Russia from the late eighteenth century till 1954. Technically however, it was indisputably Ukrainian territory, at least since 1954, when it was 'donated' to Ukraine by Khrushchev to mark the anniversary of Pereyaslav (Morrison 1993: 693). This decision was also effectively validated in the referendum on independence in 1991, when Crimea voted for the independence of Ukraine (the subsequent separatist character of Crimea has been discussed in detail in chapter 3). But both nationalists and neo-communists in the Russian parliament question its transfer to Ukraine. As most of the Russian Black Sea Fleet naval bases are located on Crimean territory, the biggest one in Sevastopol- a city emotionally loaded for the Russians, with a history of military endeavor and sacrifice, Russians want Crimea in Toto and Sevastopol.
in particular along with the Black Sea Fleet based there. Thus despite Ukraine’s technical ownership of Crimea, the Russian parliament, from the very earliest days of Ukrainian independence lunched a campaign using a combination of moral and ethical arguments to reclaim Crimea by questioning the legitimacy of Ukraine’s possession of the peninsula. In May 1992, the Russian Supreme Soviet issued a resolution challenging the 1954 decision by the Soviet authorities to change the status of Crimea from that of a Russian to that of a Ukrainian autonomous republic. This was followed on 5 December 1992 by an adoption of the Congress of the People’s Deputies of the Russian Federation, of a decision to authorize an examination of the issue of the status of Sevastopol by the Russian Supreme Soviet (Wolczuk 2003: 29).

So far as the Black Sea Fleet issue is concerned the tussle is over flags, oaths, lines of command and the basing rights that came with the fleet. The original agreement on the BSF in January 1992, in the immediate aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, for Ukraine to take 30 per cent of the BSF was never implemented as no decision was made as regards basing and territorial rights. But the first serious attempt to bring about reconciliation between the two parties was made at a meeting in Yalta in August 1992 in an effort to prevent further damage to the already strained relations. An agreement was signed between Russia and Ukraine ‘on the principles of the creation of a Ukrainian Navy and Russian Black Sea Navy on basis of the former Soviet Union Black Sea Fleet’. The agreement removed the BSF from under CIS jurisdiction, there by bilateralising a technical mutual issue. But the issue simmered on until a further meeting between Yeltsin and Kravchuk in June 1993 which led to an agreement on a fifty- fifty division to begin in September 1993, and allow Russia to continue using Sevastopol as a port after 1995 (Morrison 1993: 694). Indeed, so strong was Russia’s position, that following the Massandra summit in September 1993 Yeltsin triumphantly announced that Russia was taking ownership of Ukraine’s portion of the BSF in return for a reduction in its gas debt to Russia. Faced with a Russian threat to cut off supplies altogether, Kravchuk ‘favoured selling part of the BSF and leasing Sevastopol to Russia (Smith 1994: 9). Accused of high treason by Rukh leader Chornovil, Kravchuk said “the threat of an energy cut-off had left him with no choice: We had to act on the basis of realism.
Suppose we had slammed the door and left. The gas would have been turned off and there would have been nothing else left to do" (Kravchuk in Morrison 1993:695).

Further, Ukraine's negotiating position was weakened as its economic crisis intensified throughout 1994. As a result, its claim to fifty per cent of the fleet was dramatically water down in the Sochi accords signed on 9 June 1995 between the two presidents. The subsequent second Sochi accords of 25 November 1995, detailed the technicalities of the division of the fleet, and the first part of which went more or less according to plan. In spite of Ukrainian's misgivings as to Russian conduct, the prospect for progress were improving, as indicated by the acceptance of the new Ukrainian constitution in June 1996 and its provisions for the temporary stationing of foreign forces on Ukrainian territory. In August 1996, a joint commission was announced, but the issue of 'finalizing agreements on the status and conditions for deploying the BSF on Ukrainian territory; parameters governing the division of the fleet and its infrastructure, and the allocation of Sevastopol's bays; and the term of the lease and the system of the lease payments were remain in question. However, on 28 May 1997, Ukraine and Russia signed three inter-governmental agreements resolving the division, basing and costing of the BSF. This was followed three days later, on 31 may, by the signing of the long awaited inter-state treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership (Wolczuk 2003: 37).

On the one hand, the signing of the agreements and Russia's concessions on joint basing rights no doubt a significant achievement for Kiev, especially in the light of Russia's fears that Ukraine's Crimean bases could in practice eventually be leased out to NATO forces, but on the other the legitimization of the presence of Russian forces on Ukrainian territory for the next twenty to twenty-five years and the actual subdivision of the fleet and above all, its infrastructure was highly unfavorable to Ukraine, as were the limitations placed on the quantity and quality of berths available for the Ukrainian portion on the fleet (Sherr 1997: 42). Nevertheless, with the ratification of the treaty by the Russians and Ukrainians were duly accomplished on 24 March 1999, the overall transfer of forces from Soviet to Ukrainian jurisdiction proved to be less troublesome that might have originally been expected. Though problem areas concerning nuclear forces
and the BSF were there the exchange of unconditional recognition of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine has opened up new avenues in Ukraine-Russian relationship.

Regarding the status of the Black Sea Fleet, another accord was reached in January 2001 establishing a Ukraine-Russian command post in Sevastopol for joint patrol operation. But little progress has been achieved on these fleet related issues despite mutual promise to work toward their resolution. In June 2002 Serhiy Pirozhkov, deputy secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, observed that, since Ukraine had decided to seek NATO membership, it could not permit the deployment of foreign military forces on its territory. But after the Russian press reminded Kiev that the Fleet agreement was tied to the gas debt owed to Russia, the Ukrainian foreign ministry announced that Ukraine would meet all its promise regarding Russia's Black Sea Fleet (Sokolovskaia in Smolansky 2004: 127). The problem was however placed on the backburner in July 2003, when U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of state for Europe and Eurasia Steven Pifer announced that Washington did not regard "Ukraine's housing of the Russian Black Sea Fleet as an impediment to integration with NATO (Moscow Radio, cited in Smolansky 2004: 127)."

2.2. Existences of Contradictions
Apart from the territorial questions, Ukraine and Russia have been at odds over a number of matters such as: policies towards CIS, energy supplies for Ukraine, domestic policies and economic disparities, military capabilities, role in world affairs, NATO expansion, and humanitarian concerns.

2.2 (a) Policies towards the CIS
The most significant contrasts in strategic interests of Ukraine and Russia are reflected in their incompatible approaches towards CIS. For Russia, the commonwealth is a means of preserving or even improving its position and influence in the other former republics, thereby enhancing the prospects of a future - Russia led reintegration of the ex-Soviet states. But Ukraine although like Russia, a founder of CIS, sees the commonwealth as an
organization of equals and supports the independent aspirations of small CIS members such as Moldova, Azerbaijan, and Georgia

In light of current balance of political forces favoring it, Russia however, promotes active integration processes within the borders of the former USSR so as to restore as quickly as possible economic, political, military, and military-industrial ties that would lead to common domestic, foreign, and defense policies (Kaminski 1999:175). The strategic interest of Ukraine, as a state still undergoing formation, lies in reviving the former economic links or building new ones within the ex-USSR, first and foremost on a bilateral basis, but taking care that such relations do not acquire any non-economic features. Moreover, these restored or new economic links should be for the purpose of economic reconstruction that would later make possible Ukraine’s involvement in European integration.

2.2 (b) Energy Supplies for Ukraine
As Ukraine remains heavily dependent on Russia both as a source of import and as the destination of its exports, modern Russian discerns an interest in enhancing its output of power and natural resources as a means of pressure on Ukraine for political mileage. Owing to its much larger size of economy compared to that of Ukraine, a number of strategies have been used by Moscow to prevent Ukraine’s reorientation towards its ‘natural’ trading partners in the West. For example, Russia has tried to take advantage of Ukraine’s indebtedness to prevent a Westward drift of Ukraine. In particular, as Ukraine’s debt toward Russia has grown, Moscow has tried to this debt into assets by attempting to gain in ‘strategic’ segments of Ukraine’s infrastructure such as ownership of gas pipelines and oil refineries (Wolczuk 2003: 39). Furthermore, Moscow has striven to undermine Ukraine’s attempts to economic independence. This is something Ukraine is particularly vulnerable to, owing to the nature of the production cycle that exists between Ukraine and Russia. An example of Moscow’s efforts to take advantage of this interdependent production cycle was the steps that it took to undermine Ukraine’s ability to fulfill its contract to deliver 350 tanks to Pakistan (a contract worth $ 650 million) by
refusing to issue export licenses for Russian firms involved in providing parts to the Ukrainian tank manufacturers (ibid: 40).

To come out of Russia, Ukraine has an interest above all in removing as soon as possible its dependence on Russia for supplies of energy and resources. Thus Ukraine has lunched several attempts to diversify its energy sources. This gives it subsidiary interests in elaborating a natural program of reduction of energy consumption in both the production and social spheres, searching for deposits of sources of energy and of natural resources on its own territory, attracting foreign investment to extract these deposits, developing new technologies for mining and reducing consumption of coal and so forth.

2.2 (c) Domestic Politics and Economic Disparities
Domestic politics and economic disparities have played an important role as well in the deterioration of Russian-Ukrainian relations. President Yeltsin and his Ukrainian counterpart have had to cope with the militant ultranationalist deputies in their legislatures. The severing of many economic ties has affected Russia to a far lesser degree than it has Ukraine because of Russia's size, huge natural resources, and economic potential. Ukraine now finds itself highly vulnerable to and heavily dependent on its eastern neighbor. The economic asymmetry has been increased by differences in the speed and progress of economic reforms in the two countries.

2.2 (d) Military Capabilities
By reviving the strategically significant potential of the military-industrial complex, at least in part through reintegration, modern Russia hopes to give its military the technological means to make it most powerful in the world, capable of annihilating any enemy, of delivering preventive strikes, and of punishing adjacent and distant states. In seeking to rebuild its military-industrial complex, Ukraine has an understandable desire to ensure that its armed forces have an adequate fighting capability, but its motive is economic the essence of which is to preserve industrial potential, create competitive products, and send them to world markets. In practice, Ukraine does not pursue defense
self-sufficiency. Rather, it attaches great significance to relations within the framework of an alignment for its security.

2.2 (e) Role in World Affairs

Most political groups in today's Russia see a strategic interest in restoring it to a full fledged great power, one playing a decisive role in the international community, dictating to international organizations, and operating as an equal to any other great power or alliance of states, keeping in mind the national and patriotic convictions of a considerable part of the population. Thus Russia sees an interest in restraining the political and military integration with the West of the states adjacent to and near Ukraine.

But all of the political forces in Ukraine except the extreme leftists perceive an interest in completing the building of a state whose security would be guaranteed by a policy of noninterference in other countries and partnership with the world's democracies, which would initiate and support in international organizations propositions aimed at preserving territorial integrity and opposing new revisions of borders. Thus among Ukraine's top priority strategic interests one is the development of relations of partnership, cooperation, and integration with its close neighbors in the West as a step toward all European integration (Kaminski 1999: 176).

2.2 (f) NATO Expansion

Although Russia has reluctantly accepted an initial expansion of NATO to the east, it objects to the general principle of NATO expansion, as it regards this organization a potential enemy. Indeed, most political forces in Russia as well as its citizens view partnership with NATO as relative and not the foundation to guarantee the country's national security in the military sphere. Moscow's motives in opposing NATO enlargement are also based on its geographical interest rather than on any perception of a growing military threat. Therefore, Russia's most important demand of NATO is that Ukraine and Baltic States should be recognized as a zone of Russia's vital interests (Tolstov 1997: 14). But to remain away from Russian sphere of influence, Ukraine viewed of strengthening its partnership relations with NATO and with individual
2.2 (g) Humanitarian Concerns
After independence, Kiev has adopted a policy of Ukrainianisation i.e. de-‘Russification’ of Ukrainian language and culture as part of its policy measures to remain away from Russian influence. As a result it has raised the question of the status of Russian language in Ukraine. Further, the respective attitude toward Russians residing in Ukraine and Ukrainians living in Russia remain troublesome. By late 2000, though considerable progress had been made in this regard, the emotion-laden issue of the status of the Russian language in Ukraine has provoked a controversy in which both governments have sometimes become involved. In Moscow it has been argued that Ukraine’s Russian speaking population has been subject to forced Ukrainianisation. The number of schools in which Russian is used is decreasing, and Kiev has attempted to limit Ukrainians’ exposure to the Russian media. But in Ukraine it is viewed that the issue of protecting the Russian speaking population in Ukraine is being used by Russia as an excuse to interfere in its internal affairs (Smolansky 2004: 127).

2.3. Interdependence
Though both Russia and Ukraine have been at odds over a number of matters, that are discussed above, their unique interdependence has contributed for the normalization of relations between the two from time to time. This interdependence has a number of important dimensions that are now discussed below.

2.3 (a) Historical dimensions
Most of the present day Ukraine and European part of Russia constituted the basic area of habitation of the East Slavic tribes from which the Ukrainian and Russian peoples originated, and this territory served as the foundation of the first forms of statehood of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples. Moreover, the union of Ukraine and Moscow in 1654 marked the real beginning of the formation of Russian empire. Throughout the existence of modern Russia and Soviet state, Ukraine was their most reliable partner in the
acquisition and management of empire. Similarly, Ukraine's declaration of independence in 1991 paralyzed efforts to prepare a new union treaty and played an important role in the final collapse of the Soviet Union.

2.3(b) Geo-political Dimension
Ukraine was one of the basic components of the geopolitical complex of the Russian and Soviet empires. It controls key positions in Eurasian-avenues from the Eurasian heartland to Europe, Mediterranean countries, and the Middle East. The Expansion of 'historical Russia' took place mainly in the geopolitical zones. Ukraine served as Moscow's bridge to the West and a buffer against invasions from the West. Today the interest of both the Russian Federation and Ukraine are inseparable from the developments of these neighboring regions. The two countries are severely threatened by the 'arc of the crisis' — real and potential — from the Balkans through trans-Dniester and the Crimea to the Caucasus and Transcaucasia (Rainow 1999: 54).

2.3(c) Economic Dimension
Ukraine-Russian economic interdependence is quite unique in comparison to other CIS countries. Thus, in spite of their independent existence, their economic linkages that had formed between them over many decades, even centuries, still persists. Ukraine's dependence on Russia for energy is only one such linkage. For example, Ukraine today possesses a dominant share of the former Soviet Union's assets in a number of major economic spheres: metallurgy, the engineering industry, the oil refinery industry, agriculture, infrastructure and so forth. In these spheres, Ukraine still plays a major role in Russia's economy. The poor competitiveness of most Russian goods in foreign markets also enhances the economic interdependence of the two countries. This point of economic interdependence has been discussed in more detail in the prospect of relations as it has played a crucial role in uniting the two countries from time to time.

2.3(d) Political Dimension
The political systems of both the countries by and large ignore the principle of the real separation of powers as they reflect the semi-authoritarian legal traditions of 'rule by
consent' that are much older than the Soviet period (ibid: 55). Moreover, although Ukraine and Russia have more than 30 and more than 100 political parties, respectively, neither have any experience with a multi-party system. Even debates on such matters as political and economic reforms have developed according to similar scenarios in the two countries. These political similarities render each country sensitive to political change in the other; as such change could have carryover effects locally.

2.3 (e) Ethnic and Cultural Dimension
Historically it is also seen that Ukrainian and Russians closely resemble each other in languages, customs and ways of life, and they have a substantial common cultural heritage. In this context the words of President Kuchma seems quite logical as he has contended in his inaugural address that,

"Historically, Ukraine is part of the Euro-Asian cultural and economic space. Ukraine’s vitally important national interests are now concentrated on this territory of the former Soviet Union.... We are also linked with... the former republics of the former Soviet Union by traditional, scientific, cultural, informational and family ties.... I am convinced that Ukraine can assume the role of one of the leaders of Euro-Asian economic integration" (cited in Burant 1995:1138).

Again to him, 'Russia is our great neighbor...we are connected by a thousand years of history’ (ibid: 1138). It is also generally known that, the proportion and significance of ethnic Ukrainian in Russia and ethnic Russians in Ukraine and their activities in the politics, economy, and culture of the respective countries go far beyond the limits of the classical definition of ‘ethnic minorities’. The Russian language is also the de facto second language of Ukraine. Due to the above commonalities of interests both the countries however, avoided engagement of any direct confrontation and keep their options open for negotiation for a better future cooperation.

2.4. Prospect for cooperation
The most important guiding factor to any prospect of Ukraine-Russian relation is economic in nature. It is widely evident since Ukraine has got its independence. During the presidency of Leonard Kravchuk, though Ukraine had adopted a pro-West foreign
policy, it remained dependent upon Russia for its economic development, and during Leonid Kuchma’s presidency, Ukraine-Russian relations centered on economic interdependence and marked the beginning of a new era.

The development of relations between Russia and Ukraine since Leonid Kuchma’s election to the Ukrainian presidency in 1994 provides in this respect an interesting case in point. President Kuchma had been the manager of the largest missile plant in Europe, President of Ukrainian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs and representative of the Russian speaking eastern regions of the country, where economic relations with Russia were still strong. In view of the background, Kuchma’s political ascendance promised to redraw relations between Russia and Ukraine from confrontational idealism to economic pragmatism (Puglisi 2003: 827). During Kuchma’s term in office an economic elite also emerged in Ukraine. Their swinging interests against or in favour of co-operation with Russia significantly affected the course of relations between the two neighboring states. Ukrainian politicians argued relations with Russia in terms of ideology the business community viewed it in terms of survival of Ukrainian economy. But thanks to the presumption of a common language, based on the shared aim of preserving and strengthening existing business links, economic actors were viewed as the agents who could counter the nationalistic rhetoric of political leaders (ibid: 828).

This phase also coincided with the growth of large financial-industrial conglomerates in Russia whose economic might allowed them to pursue active business interests within the former Soviet space. Thus, in response to Ukraine’s pragmatic approach to foreign policy, during his September 1994 visit to Kiev, Russian foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev stressed that there was no greater priority for Russian foreign policy than to normalize relations with Ukraine. The time has come, Kozyrev suggested, to abandon divisions between big brother and little brother, because the two countries were just twins (Golos Ukrainy in Puglisi 2003: 831). Moscow’s this new approach to relations with Ukraine influenced industrial enterprises across the borders to re-establish industrial connections from the Soviet era.
Since Russia was the main consumer of Ukrainian foodstuffs – wheat, meat and sugar in particular in the first half of 1996, Ukraine accounted for 52% of Russian imports from the CIS, and 49% of Russian exports to the CIS (Puglisi 2003: 829). So also even after independence Russia had remained the primary provider of energy supplies for Ukraine, the main creditor and the single largest market. Ukraine imported from Russia almost 90% of its oil and more than 60% of its gas supplies every year (ibid.).

Such economic interdependence has however contributed to mutual understanding of both the countries in many ways. Kuchma and his administration have negotiated and signed the long-awaited “Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership” agreement (May 1997) which for the first time after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, set relations between Russia and Ukraine on an equal footing. Ukrainian sovereignty was also formally acknowledged and the mutual inviolability of borders was sanctioned. In February 1998 both signed a ten year Agreement on Economic Cooperation, and Ukraine officially opened Ukrainian privatization to Russian investors. In the meeting that accompanied the signature of the treaty in Moscow, Kuchma and Yeltsin spoke in favor of Russian and Ukrainian businesses having free access to each other’s market, stepping up investment policies on a mutually beneficial basis and creating international financial and industrial groups (ibid: 833).

The radical realignment of the President and some segments of the Ukrainian elite towards Russia contributed in advancing the interests of Russian businesses in Ukraine, providing them with profitable connections. Kuchma also intervened in the course of the large-scale privatization to persuade the Ukrainian public that Russian enterprises were more efficient than local owners (ibid: 839). Ukraine’s such policies further helped Russian companies to establish their stronghold in Ukraine.

When Ukraine’s more closeness with Russia adversely affected domestic economic reforms leading to domestic instability, and Ukraine lost its international reputation and Western economic aid slowed down, Russia became more central in the
foreign policy calculation of Kuchma. Indeed, Kuchma proclaimed on several occasions that “Russia is a strategic partner of Ukraine aside from which there is no alternative (“Naveki s Russkim Narodom” in Toritsyn & Miller 2002: 118). Ukraine’s such pro-Russian orientation further strengthened in 2000 with the appointment of Moscow-oriented diplomat Anatoly Zlenko as its ambassador, and Kuchma’s inability to continue to obtain Western recourses fuelled his interest in strengthening ties with Russia.

In 2000 alone Putin and Kuchma held eight meetings with one another, a clear indicator of a burgeoning relationship. The signing of a series of agreements culminating in 16 documents on economic cooperation in February 2001 also aimed at strengthening cooperation in the areas of high technology, industry and energy (ibid: 119). Further in January 2001, the sacking of Energy Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, and in May 2001 the replacement of the pro-reformist premier Viktor Yushchenko with Anatoliy Kinakh in complement to Vladimir Putin’s appointment of former Russian premier Viktor Chernomyrdin, as Russian ambassador to Ukraine, were the sign of the development of Ukraine-Russian relationship. This mutual understanding to strengthen cooperation almost fruitfully continued till 2004 in a cordial manner with Kuchma’s whim and vigor to remain engaged within CIS and Russia.

3. Ukrainian Foreign Policy towards Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and emergence of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in its place signifies the end of an epoch of world history. On 8 December 1991, this historic event took place, when three former Soviet Republics- Russia, Ukraine and Belorus met at Belovezh near Minsk and denounced the Union Treaty of 1922, and proclaimed the establishment of the CIS. It was only subsequently that other republics of the Soviet Union- Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and the Central Asian republics joined in, raising the membership of the CIS to eleven. As the name itself reflects its rootlessness, within days of the formation of the CIS, serious differences became visible over the way the CIS must evolve. Two contradictory ideological positions evolved concerning its development. The first was the consolidation of the CIS as a common entity with certain
institutional structures; the second is the opposition to this consolidation and institutionalization. Among those holding the latter position Ukraine is the most important.

This may be surprising because Ukraine is a founder member of the CIS. But most importantly, to uphold its newly born independence, Ukraine under Kravchuk showed its lack of enthusiasm and resistance to integration within the CIS. Under Kuchma, Ukraine however moved from considering the CIS as a ‘civilized means of divorce (Bukkvoll 1997:63) seeing it as an acceptable tool for increased economic cooperation. In the late 1990s due to economic hardship, Ukraine finds it valuable to be a part of the CIS both because of the need for economic cooperation and because the CIS provides a platform for dialogue. Moreover, whether Ukraine will continue to value it naturally depends upon how the cooperation develops (ibid: 64)

3.1 Formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS): A New Alliance

In order to build democratic and law-governed state and to develop their relations on the basis of mutual recognition and respect for each other’s sovereignty and of the principles of equal rights and non-interference in internal affairs and for strengthening of friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation to meet the fundamental interests of their peoples and to serve the cause of peace and security (Agreement signed on CIS in SWB 1991: C1/1), on 8 December 1991, in Minsk three Slav erstwhile Soviet Republics-Russia, Ukraine and Belarus signed an agreement to set up a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In the declaration on formation of Commonwealth of Independent States, the leaders of the republics of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine noted that the negotiations to draw up a new union treaty are deadlocked, that the objective process of secession by republics from the USSR and the formation of independent states have become a reality(ibid: C1/2). By signing the agreement however, the parties took the decision to dissolve the Soviet Union as an entity of international law, by abrogating the December 1922 Union Treaty which had founded the single multinational state of USSR.
From the moment of the conclusion of the agreement, the application of the norms of third countries, including the former USSR, on the territory of the states which have signed it, was made impermissible, and the activity of bodies of the former union ceased. Fulfillment of international commitments stemming from treaties and agreements signed by the USSR is, however, guaranteed. The members of the commonwealth intend to cooperate in guaranteeing international peace and security and implementation of measures to reduce military expenditure and armaments. They have declared their intention to strive for elimination of nuclear weapons and for total disarmament under international control. At the same time, the sides will respect each other's desire to achieve the status of a nuclear-free-zone and neutral state. It has been decided to preserve unified command of a common military-strategic space and unified control over nuclear weapons.

The parties also confirmed their commitment to the goals and principles of the UN Charter and of the Helsinki Final Act, bound themselves to observe international norms on human rights and rights of peoples, guaranteed their citizens equal rights and freedoms, irrespective of their nationality, and committed themselves to promote the preservation and development of the cultural, linguistic and religious individuality of ethnic minorities (ibid: C1/2). With the aim of developing equal and mutually beneficial cooperation of the peoples and states, it has been decided to conclude special agreements in the sphere of politics, the economy, culture, education, public health, science, trade, the environment and other fields. A statement has been made on recognition of and respect for the territorial integrity and inviolability of the existing borders, the open nature of these and the freedom of movement of citizens. The sides also consider their joint activity on the following areas: the coordination of external policy, the formation and development of the common economic areas, the European and Euro-Asian markets, the customs and migration policies, the development of transport and communication systems, the protection of the environment and ecological safety and the fight against organized crime. Finally, the members of the commonwealth make the agreement open for accession to all the members of the former USSR and also other states that share the
aims and principles of the document. The city of Minsk has been chosen as the official location of the coordinating bodies of the commonwealth.

The next stage of formation of CIS was the meeting of the Central Asian republics in Ashkhabad. The Minsk agreement has apparently given rise to fears of a new level of Slav-non-Slav conflict in the perceptions of different sections of the political class. But the leadership of the Central Asian republics did not fall a prey to the propaganda against the Minsk agreement that it was only a Slav union. Taking account of the open nature of the commonwealth the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan met at Ashkhabad on 13 December 1991 and adopted a declaration announcing their decision to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (Gupta 1992: 7). To be more appropriate, they took the position that they would not like to be left out of the position of being co-founders. They viewed the Minsk initiative as positive in the wake of the dead end that was reached on the search of a new union. In this the leaders supported the Minsk assessment of the endeavors connected with the union treaty.

However, the declaration rightly criticized the leaders of the three republics who met at Minsk. It said that the documents with regard to the Commonwealth of Independent States should have taken into consideration the historic and socio-economic realities of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. It underlined the need “to guarantee the equality of rights of all nations and ethnic groups and the protection of their rights and interests” and asserted that the “Commonwealth of Independent States can not take shape on an ethnic, religious or any other basis that infringes the rights of the person and peoples” (ibid: 7). Moreover, it agreed with the Minsk agreement on the strategic issue of control of nuclear weapons and a unified command for strategic restraint troops and naval forces (ibid: 7). But doubts about the exact position of the Central Asian republics in the Commonwealth of Independent States were expressed. Islam Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan admitted that some doubts remained whether the leaders would manage to end for ever the secondary role which for a long time was allocated to the raw-material producing Central Asian region. However, he reflected the solidarity of leaders
by saying that they are going to create living conditions, which would allow the citizens of all nationalities to live in peace, prosperity and harmony (The Ashkhabad Meeting in SWB 1991: C1/2).

The last phase in the formation of Commonwealth of Independent States was the meeting at Alma Ata in Kazakhstan. On 21 December 1991, in Alma Ata, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine, signed a protocol known as the Alma-Ata declaration, which on the whole supports the general principles adopted at the Minsk agreement (The Alma-Ata Meeting in SWB 1991: C1/1), and says that the reservations and observations of the other states will be taken into account during the process of ratifying these documents, after which the documents will come into effect. This declaration also put its approval on the idea of not creating a central authority. Instead it agreed to have coordinating bodies stationed in Minsk. Further, the Alma Ata meeting decided to politically disband the Soviet Union, which led to the resignation of Mikhail Gorbachev since the USSR had neither a de-facto nor a de-jure existence. With the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics ceased to exist (ibid: C1/7).

However, this commonwealth was exclusive in nature since it did not involve the ‘Centre’ and the rest of the republics who had been party to the 1922 treaty. Thus, its legal basis was questioned by Gorbachev and a number of analysts, who considered it hasty, arbitrary and undemocratic. Especially since a decision of this order should be based on a referendum. Therefore, Gorbachev termed the process as one, which was “outside the morality of politics”.

Moreover, the CIS agreement covers the barest possible necessities required in interstate relations (Chenoy 1992: 8). Since the contracting parties did not find the concept of a common centre workable they agreed to form Inter-Republican Councils and separate agreements on specific issues, such as, coordinating radical economic reform, sticking to the ruble, etc. They also decided on the issue of respect for territorial integrity.
and guarantee of equal rights and freedoms for citizens. But the idea of a joint defense and nuclear control has already run into problem. Ukraine's opposition on nuclear control by Russia, and determination to maintain its own armed forces is just the first set of problems for the CIS. The agreement on the CIS thus, is full of opportunities for misinterpretation and is ambiguously drafted and can lead to endless strife (ibid: 9).

In spite of that many areas of policy such as education, foreign policy, social policy governmental structures have been left out. Important issues like coordination mechanism, approaches to ethnic problem, settlement of disputes, sharing of resources have been left untouched, which means if these were sorted out, there would be no CIS at all. Therefore, it was commented that the CIS agreement is patchy and hasty in nature and it has come up in an ad hoc way as a result of break up of Soviet Union, and many problems unstated in the agreements may determine its future (ibid: 8).

3.2 Ukraine and the Commonwealth of Independent States

The replacement of the Soviet Union by the CIS, which has no statehood of its own, was by any standards a historic victory for Ukrainian interests (Morrison 1993: 688). But, within days of the formation of the CIS, Ukraine began to have serious differences over the way the CIS must evolve. At every meeting of the heads of state or heads of government held since then, the gap that separates Ukraine from others has widened and the CIS finds Ukraine standing forth as one of its strongest critics (Joshi 1994: 1367). An examination of the Ukraine's position on the numerous issues that have come up at several summit meetings would show that the differences are on the basic understanding about, or the concept of the CIS.

When Ukraine signed the Minsk Agreement, it had expected the CIS to evolve on the pattern of the European Community (EC), with all states enjoying fruitful and cooperative relations. Importantly, it was clear that there won't be any breakdown of the sovereignty and independence of any member state. In line with this, President Kravchuk had expected that the CIS would primarily promote two objectives: that it would create the necessary conditions for building cooperative relations among the republics of the
former Soviet Union, and that it would promote such relations on the basis of equality and justice (ibid: 1368). However, according to his perception, the CIS has not moved in that direction.

On the other hand, the CIS itself has been treated by Ukraine only as a mechanism for negotiating the issues inherited from the disintegration of the USSR. As Ukraine played a decisive role in creating the CIS as an instrument for the breaking down of the Soviet Union to get independence, its parliament would not ratify the agreement’s promises to maintain a single economic and military space and a coordinated foreign policy after it got independence. Rather the Ukrainian parliament was amounted to a substantial redrafting of the agreement. Although the changes were officially labeled as ‘reservations’, the outcome was that the Ukrainian parliament voted on a text, which had been substantially amended to water down Ukraine’s commitments to the CIS (Morrison 1996: 689) In this context when Yeltsin and Kozyrev were questioned in the Russian parliament (about these amendments), they replied (no doubt on the basis of assurances from Kiev) that the changes were purely technical and without substance. However, as soon as the Russian and Belarusian parliaments ratified the original version of the Brest Accords, Ukraine declared that since neither Moscow nor Minsk had voiced any objection to the Ukrainian amended text, this would be the only valid one as far as Kiev was concerned (ibid: 689). Importantly, Kiev’s such type of unchanged determination that the new organization be no more than a temporary mechanism for ‘civilized divorce’ has left Russia and integrationist states such as Kazakhstan firmly in control of the agenda.

Nevertheless, in the beginning leaders, analysts, observes and others from the Russian Federation, the largest and the most important member of the CIS, have only stressed that member states should strive for close and comprehensive cooperation. Russia has also decided to become the key element of the CIS. Claims of a right to dominate in the CIS are found in numerous statements of Russian leaders, as well as in Russia’s absorption of all Soviet administrative structures, including Soviet property (Holovaty 1995:14). All these statements created suspicions in the minds of Ukrainian
politicians regarding the real intention of Russia, and continued to worry Ukrainian politicians. Thus, as Ukraine was not in a position to lose its independence, it denied a policy of restoring the Moscow-centered CIS.

Simultaneously, some Ukrainian leaders called for withdrawal from the CIS altogether. Rukh leader, V. Chornovil, addressing his followers in December 1992, attacked the CIS as one of the greatest moral and psychological blows against our newly attained independence and described it as a ‘neo-imperial phantom’ which existed to pump resources out of Ukraine (Morrison 1996: 689). Moreover, caught between conflicting pressures from those advocating Ukraine’s withdrawal from the CIS and those want to maintain economic ties with Russia, Kravchuk temporized for most of 1992 with a policy of staying in the CIS but blocking all movers to make the organization effective and frequently opting out of agreements as a non-interested party.

However, as given the widely differing perceptions of Russia, on the one hand, and Ukraine, on the other, it is obvious that a lot of mistrust of the CIS prevails in Ukraine. In an interview to interfax (a Russian news agency), in January 1993, Kravchuk pointed out that “in its present form the Commonwealth (i.e. the CIS) will not live long, perhaps we are not mature enough to understand correctly the concept of Commonwealth” (Mayak Radio News in FBIS 1993:9). Ukraine fears that the CIS is recreating the old style centralised state. That is to say, Ukraine’s apprehensions about the CIS are based on the positions taken by the later on political, military and economic issues.

3.2(a) Political Integration in the CIS and Ukraine

Ever since the inception of the CIS in December 1991, the development of this organization has been unbalanced as it did not develop into a homogenous organization with a unified status of its members in regard to their rights, objectives and intentions. The reason is that its two main actors Russia and Ukraine have opposite perceptions.
On the one hand, Russia regarded and continues to regard the CIS as the way to integrate former Soviet territory, be it in the form of a confederation, federation, or a union (Holovaty 1995: 14). For this, Russia itself is undertaking steps to strengthen the political union. In particular, this is demonstrated by the attempt to form a legislative body for the CIS countries. The formation of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of the countries of the CIS (March 1992) is one step in this direction. However, as the documents adopted by the inter-parliamentary Assembly of the CIS are of little effect and do not conform to the legislation of many of the CIS member states and has no direct influence on the political process within the CIS, it does not satisfy Russia. Therefore, Russia goes one step further in the way of political integration within the CIS. It actively supported the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, for the status of Inter-parliamentary Assembly of CIS and transform it into a body, which will adopt laws that are binding on the territory of all the nations of the CIS (ibid:15). Program committees and working groups have already been formed and are working to prepare model codes for the CIS countries: the Civil, the Civil Procedural, the Criminal and the Criminal Procedural Codes. The creation of a single legal system for the CIS countries is also being formed through these means, thereby strengthening the basis of a future political union.

However, on a quick move in the direction of political integration within the CIS, in January 1993, in Minsk, Russia along with other seven members but without Ukraine and Turkmenistan, signed the CIS Charter which commits participants to ‘a coordinated policy in the sphere of international security, disarmament, arms control and the organizational development of the armed forces’. Moreover, using a formulation strongly having characteristics of the Soviet era, the Charter binds signatories to respond jointly to security threats through ‘collective self-defense’ and envisages a permanent body of representatives from each state and a secretariat (ibid: 15).

On the other hand, Ukraine, by insisting its own independence has been discouraging the idea of transformation of the CIS into a Union, federation or confederation. It maintains that the CIS is not a subject of international law. It
emphasized that the coordinating bodies of the CIS can not lay down law as they are supposed to be no more than consultative bodies. However, the practice that has evolved in the CIS is that all documents are being adopted on the basis of a majority vote, instead of consensus. Therefore, Kravchuk has pointed out: “We did not envisage equipping the Commonwealth with any special mechanism. We counted on the documents prepared by the leaders of the states on their own (Interview in Interfax 1993).” At the Bishek Summit held in October 1992, Ukraine adopted a tough stand against the integrative tendencies in the CIS. It refused to sign the agreements on creating an inter-state television and Radio Company, a single monetary system, and the economic court. Such bodies, in Ukraine’s view, only strengthen integrative tendencies.

Moreover, the most significant step which Ukraine had taken was its refusal at the Minsk Summit held in January 1993, to give its approval to the CIS charter. In its view, the Charter infringes its independence and hence is unacceptable. Further, Ukraine holds that the Charter is still a “raw abstract document” to be “specified” in the process of finalization. To Kravchuk, this task would require at least ten years. To establish political and economic structures without settling all the details might facilitate the emergence of a strong centralised state, which is not what the CIS is supposed to stand for. In fact, Kravchuk firmly believes that “Russia has never given up its intention to be a super power and the leading force in the CIS and outside the CIS (Mayak Radio news in BIS 1993).

Similarly in April 1993, Ukraine expressed its reservations about the draft statute of the CIS Coordination Consultative Committee. It did so again from a feeling that the statute would lead to a unified union state and turn the CIS into a union. In fact, it wants the CIS to focus on economic integration. But Yeltsin has made it clear that “integration can only be a package deal and that Ukraine can not expect the economic benefits of CIS membership without signing up for political agreements as well (Morrison 1993: 690).

However, in order to maintain its independent stand on CIS issues and to remain away from the process of political integration of CIS, in spite of economic hardships,
Ukraine put forth, some documents of its own vision on CIS development. For instance, the Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Anatoly Zlenko, said in an interview that Ukraine had submitted two documents for the consideration of the member states of the CIS. One was the Charter for defining the relationship between the member states of the CIS and regulating relations among them, and the other was a Declaration of Principles for Economic Cooperation, which would lay the basis for economic cooperation among the member states of the CIS. Side by side, in the field of foreign policy, Ukraine envisaged no role at all for the CIS. In an expression it said, “We do not intend to form any Commonwealth structures to act on its behalf in the international arena. The Commonwealth will not be making decisions for everyone although joint steps will be agreed” (Joshi 1994: 1371).

Such defiant behavior on the part of Ukraine is obvious as its desire for independence having been fulfilled, it would not risk its independence again under any circumstances. Therefore, insisting its constitutional provisions that “Ukrainian law forbids the executive branch of power to conclude any international agreements where Ukraine enters a union with international status and super power functions” (Holovaty 1995: 14), Ukraine has managed to avoid full incorporation into Russia’s political orbit within the framework of the CIS.

In order to be more secure in future, Ukraine has set before itself the goal of achieving its integration into Europe. But soon its suspicions as to the intentions of the Russians were further confirmed in 1994 by the head of Russian foreign Intelligence, Yevgeniy Primakov, who suggested that,

“The organization of the CIS lends to itself to the formation of a union under the leadership of Russia, to the supranational structure of which member states will delegate some of their defense and economic functions. Such a structure is very similar to the political makeup of the former Soviet Union” (Primakov quoted in Wolczuk 2003: 59).

In pursuit of stronger sub-CIS ties further on 2 April 1996 a treaty was signed between Russia and Belarus on ‘the Creation of a Community of Sovereign Republics’,
something which Belarusian President Lukashenko characterized as the 'first stage' of the CIS. As political integration progressed, President Kuchma however unambiguously laid out Ukraine's antipathy towards political, economic, military or other forms of integration with the CIS. During his speech to the Western European Union in June 1996 he not only underlined his pro-European orientation, but shut the door quite categorically on any hopes for a new supranational role for the CIS. But it is noteworthy that a change in the constellation of forces within Ukraine's in 1999 brought about a change in Ukraine's status in relation to the CIS. The election of the left winger Tkachenko as speaker of Ukrainian parliament led to Ukraine joining the Inter-parliamentary Assembly (IPA) of CIS in 1999. It is worth noting that in joining the IPA Ukraine became a member of a body which is regulated by Article 36 of the Charter of the CIS to which Ukraine is not a signatory. Further in January 2003, to get economic benefit from CIS Kuchma was elected to head the CIS Council of Heads of states, and decided to create a free-trade zone in February 2003 (Kuzio 2003: 24&27). But from time to time Ukraine moved away from the demands of the IPA as Kiev sought to harmonize its legislation with that of the European Union (EU).

3.2(b) Economic Integration in the CIS and Ukraine
The collapse of the Soviet Union marked the beginning of a new era with the former Soviet republics developing as new independent states, and among the most essential problems they faced was the question of mutual economic inter-action. As member states of the CIS they faced contradictory processes and tendencies, at times forcing them into decisions, which were more chaotic rather than logical or well founded (Filipenko 1995: 50). On the one hand, all the CIS member states have demonstrated a great desire to continue to develop their sovereignty while maintaining independence from Russia. On the other hand, the majority of them remain economically tied to Russia, which is a source of their most important resources as well as a market for their goods. They also determined the necessity to search for new ways of developing mainly bilateral economic

2 The importance of the CIS IPA has been dismissed by nationalists in the Ukrainian parliament on the grounds that it can hold consultations and make recommendations, but not enforce anything, RFE/RL, 3 March 1999, in Wolczuk Roman (2003), Ukraine's Foreign and Security Policy 1991-2000, Routledge Curzon, London and New York, p.59.
relations with Russia. However, at this critical juncture, Russia worked to create multilateral integration mechanisms within the framework of the CIS while carrying out bilateral economic cooperation. Russia’s intention also appeared to be quite simple: to preserve the economic, political and military unity of the former Soviet Union, and to link the newly independent states to Russia and Russian interests. Through multilateral agreements like the CIS Economic Union, CIS Customs Union, Interstate Bank, Interstate Economic Committee etc., Russia intended to narrow the opportunities for interaction of CIS countries with external countries, as well as, limit their independent search for partners in pursuit of their own national interest (ibid: 50).

Nevertheless, Economic cooperation within the CIS has developed mainly on bilateral basis, in spite of Russia’s intention of establishing multilateral cooperation within an institution. But the irony of the fact was that Russia dominated all the bilateral economic relations with its 59 per cent of the total GDP of the CIS countries, 91 per-cent of the oil, 77 percent of the natural gas, 58 percent of the steel, and two thirds of the machine building production of the CIS (ibid: 51). So also the economic crisis within the CIS member states makes them more willing to cooperate with Russia. Thus, the well-known economist N. Shmelev stressed in the Russian journal “Voprosy Ekonomiki” that “obvious economic bankruptcy of the majority of post-Soviet republics makes acceleration of economic integration quite possible”(ibid: 52).

However, Ukraine’s policies on economic integration within the CIS remain quite unique. When the CIS was created, both official state representatives and members of the political elite in Ukraine considered the CIS nothing but a structure which should secure the interests of the republics when dividing the property, gold and diamond funds, and foreign assets of the former Soviet Union. But using tactics of delays, economic pressure and threats, Russia in fact torpedoed a normal process of separation into independent states. In particular, the so-called “Zero variant” in the distribution of debts and asserts, which was imposed upon Ukraine, led to direct loss on the part of Ukraine of 30-50 billion U.S. dollar (ibid: 54).
Therefore, keeping in mind the initial developments in CIS on economic matters Ukraine determined its position on economic integration in the CIS by taking into account the positions of the main political forces of the parliament and the President and his administration. The main features, characterizing the approaches to the formation of the CIS and its mechanisms, which Ukraine adopted, can be described as follows:

1. Retention of national sovereignty, opposition to creation of supra-state structures which might renovate the former Union bodies;
2. Support of an evolitional, progressive character of economic integration, dictated by the existing conditions; a gradual development from the simplest forms of integration (free trade, customs union) to more complex and higher forms (common market, economic and currency unions);
3. The priority of national economic interests, guarantee of economic security of the country;
4. Rejection of any domination of one country in the mutually formed interstate organizations and associations;
5. Development and deepening of relations with CIS countries must not be carried out at the expense of Ukraine’s relations with other developed countries of the world;
6. The participation of Ukraine must not contradict the Ukrainian Constitution, the Declaration of State Sovereignty, the Act of Independence and current legislation (ibid: 55).

Virtually, these principles are to some extent reflected in Ukraine’s relations to the CIS. For instance, Ukraine did not sign the CIS Charter adopted in January 1993 and also did not take part in either the creation of a Customs Union (13 March 1992) nor in the ruble zone of 7 September 1993. However, those who favour accepting the CIS Charter fear that if Ukraine does not sign the Charter, Russia would cut up its supplies of oil, gas and timber. But this fear of a section of the Ukrainian people is unfounded. As Kravchuk pointed out, the economic difficulties of the country would continue even if Ukraine signs the Charter. The problem lies in dealing with the producers directly and in
coming to some agreement with them. Russia has merely fixed the export quota (Joshi 1995: 1370). But on the other hand, the fear of Russian dominance compel to almost all influential political forces in the Ukraine, (with the exception of the socialists, the former Communists and the plant directors who formerly belonged to the old nomenclature) to reject the country's accession to an economic union. To Ukrainians, the economic union seeks to create supranational structures under Russian leadership and to coordinate all economic-policy activities-monetary, credit, fiscal and trade, and industrial policies.

Besides all these, however, by the second half of 1993, due to economic pressures Ukrainian leaders choose reintegration with Russia and the CIS in preference to the risks of isolation. After much hesitation, Kravchuk supported the CIS Economic Union Agreement drafted initially (September 1993) by Kuchma with the Russian and Belarusian governments as a blue print for a more integrated CIS (Morrison 1993: 691). But the position of Ukraine remains very unique as it joined only as an associate member in the CIS Economic Union, a status of an unspecified nature. Again in October 1994, Kiev demonstrated similar behavior when Ukraine joined the Interstate Economic Committee after posting a whole host of reservations. In particular, Kiev insisted that a provision be made for each country independently to decide on exactly which functions would be delegated to the committee (Wolczuk 2003: 63).

When in January 1995, Russia proposed the setting up of the long awaited Customs Union, Ukraine remained resolutely beyond it, as its provisions were reducing the prospects for Ukraine's membership of Western sub-regional institutions. Subsequently, in March 1996, Russia Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement 'On Deepening Integration', a CIS version of the European Union, as ever, Ukraine remained conspicuously to one side (Holos Ukrainy in ibid: 63). While the proposals to create a CIS free economic zone was endorsed by CIS Prime Ministers in November 1998, the suggestion for merging the CIS Inter-state Economic Committee and the Executive Secretariat was rejected by Ukraine amongst others, despite Prime Minister Primakov's assurance that it would not become a supra-national body (RFE/RL in ibid: 63).
Nevertheless, though it is a fact for Ukraine that the creation of a comprehensive and mutually beneficial economic cooperation with a respective legal mechanism will allow to solve many, if not all, current problems within the CIS, and might possibly create a pattern of cooperation in other spheres, still it stands as a strongest critic of the CIS economic integration mechanisms. The stand point of Ukraine is that the attempt to transform the CIS Economic Union into "a single Eurasian economic space" in no way accords with the national interests of Ukraine as it contains provisions like the prohibition for members of the CIS Economic Union to become members of other countries' economic or customs union. But at the same time it demonstrates the essence of the geopolitical and geo-strategic interests of Russia (Holovaty 1995: 15). So also Ukraine pointed out that the main problem in the union was Russia, unable or unwilling to view itself as an equal partner in the CIS, and continuing to pursue its political, economic and military policies as if it was a new centre (Solchanyk 1992: 8). But due to the debt argument with Russia, Ukraine became unable to mobilize much support against Moscow from other former Soviet republics on multilateral issues. It has often been left to negotiate alone with Moscow rather than as part of a coalition of 'near abroad' countries, many of whom share its suspicions of Russian policy and initially looked to it as a counterweight to Moscow (Morrison, 1993: 699).

However, Ukraine’s leaders were persistently opposed to any kind of subordinating and centralizing CIS structures which might tend to recreate the former system with Russia dominating as the centre. Such attitude, in spite of the worsening economic situation of the country, gave Ukrainian leaders the opportunity to take advantage of the logic of integrational development and to try to convince the leaders of other CIS countries to reconsider the place and role of the organization in their foreign economic programmes.

3.2 (c) Military Integration in the CIS and Ukraine
The very idea of military integration on the basis of the principle of collective security of the countries of the CIS is the determined effort of Russia to attain integration and gather
the former Soviet republics together under its leadership and in a Russian sphere of influence. For this purpose the first concrete step, which Russia has taken, is well known as the ‘Agreement on Collective Security’ of the member states of the CIS dated May 15, 1992 (the Tashkent Agreement). Through this Russia proceeded toward the creation of a collective security system of the CIS and for uniting the systems for anti-air and anti-missile defense, and the defense of outer space (Holovaty 1995: 16). Russia insisted on creating a “joint national boundaries of the CIS” or “common CIS border defense” towards the outside world and also permanent structures or forces for peacekeeping within the CIS (ibid: 16). Apart from this, as the borders of Russia are pushed back without Ukraine, weakening the Russian’s abilities to project their power and influence onto Europe, Russia, tried to keep Ukraine within its orbit through the military integration of the CIS.

However, most importantly insisting its constitutional position of a neutral non-aligned state, Ukraine did not sign the 1992 Tashkent treaty on collective security. Significantly, as the treaty forbade its members to join military alliances against another member, obliged all to support a signatory state which was attacked from out-side and created a Collective Security Council to coordinate military activities, Ukraine cautiously pointed out that the Tashkent treaty reflects Russian strategic interests above all and it is completely opposed to the national interests of Ukraine (ibid: 16). Ukraine was also alarmed by the fact that the Tashkent treaty members had no veto right concerning the use of united military forces. It feared that the clause on “deployment and functioning of collective security system objects”, i.e. Russian military bases could represent a threat. Ukraine also finds that the clause that a state could only withdraw from the treaty, if it fulfilled all obligations connected with this also served as a means of pressure (Potekhin & Oldberg 1995:70). Therefore, instead of multilateral military integration Ukraine preferred economic cooperation and bilateral ties with the CIS countries.

Moreover, the question of how Russia defines the CIS and its role in it is no less problematic for the Ukraine. It was only the formal status of the strategic nuclear armed forces a section of the military answerable to the CIS supreme command, which
prevented the complete separation of Ukraine from the military structures of the CIS (Alexandrova 1994: 73). Therefore, it became a great concern for Ukraine. This vital issue of having common armed forces has also dominated most summit meetings. President Kravchuk agreed on the advisability of having a single command for nuclear weapons, but emphatically rejected the idea of having a common military machine. In fact, even before the leaders assembled for Alma Ata Summit in December 1991, he had said: “Unified armed forces herald the end of democracy and the end of independence. The logic is that armed forces listen to one man”. Elaborating further, he had declared: “We have not merely an independent Ukraine, but an independent and strong Ukraine, which will have its own armed forces, institutions of authority and law” (Interview to the News Agency Interfax 1991).

In this context, the former Ukrainian Defense Minister Konstantin Morozov also announced that a state, which wanted to be independent in its military policy, could not belong to an alliance, which did not take into account the interests of that state. To him, the proposed CIS security system ran contrary to the legally defined interests of the Ukrainian state (Alexandrova 1994: 73). Nevertheless, Ukraine expressed its willingness to work together in the military-technical fields within the CIS frame, but not in the military-political field.

Moreover, Kiev’s fear about the command structures of the CIS, which could all too easily be transformed into an instrument of Russian hegemonic power, makes her careful regarding the CIS developments. In the first three years of the existence of CIS, Ukraine signed 517 documents (including 81 signed with reservations) adopted by the Council of Heads of State and the Council of Heads of Government. Notably, Ukraine refused to sign 210 documents; 108 of these were of a military political character (Kirsenko in Lena Jonson 1995: 64). Between December 1991 and July 1992 Ukraine only signed 11 of the 41 military – political agreements signed within the CIS (ibid: 64). Several CIS military–political documents regulating practical cooperation were signed, however, but with reservations. Side by side, Ukraine was careful not to sign documents establishing permanent structures or forces for peacekeeping within the CIS. But the
basic CIS document on peacekeeping from May 1992, which comes closer to traditional UN peacekeeping than the later CIS documents, was signed by Ukraine with reservations. Documents concerning the formation, structure and financing of groups of military observers and collective CIS peacekeeping forces were also signed with some reservations in 1992 (ibid:65).

Apart from this, Ukraine participated in decisions on actions in specific cases of inter-ethnic and other conflicts. Documents on peacekeeping in Tajikistan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhazia were also agreed to. So also at the CIS summit in Alma-Ata in February 1994, President Kravchuk signed the Memorandum on Preserving Peace and Stability in the CIS and some other documents but avoided participating in discussion or signing documents on CIS collective security, actions of collective peacekeeping forces, as well as the situation at the Tajik-Afghan border. Any direct participation by Ukraine in Moscow-headed armed peacekeeping actions in Tajikistan or elsewhere in the CIS also strongly opposed by the public opinion for both pacifist and national reasons (ibid: 66).

Russia’s claim to be the sole guarantor of peace and of security on the territory of the former USSR creates the opened risk that Russia could adopt a policing function, which would inevitably lead to intervention in the internal affairs of the states concerned and would jeopardize their sovereignty and territorial integrity. More than this Kiev is concerned not without reason that the world’s major powers would be willing to accept Russia as a policing power on the territory of the former USSR for fear of armed conflicts (Alexandrova 1994: 73-74). According to a number of Ukrainian analysts, Russia’s interests in this respect tally with those of the international community. This situation makes Ukrainians view Russia as an even greater possible threat. Some politicians and political scientists, therefore, come to the conclusion that the political, economic and military independence of the Ukraine is above all threatened by its membership of the CIS (ibid: 74).

However, the desire to uphold its sovereignty and contain the sphere of influence of Russia, Ukraine along with Georgia, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova formed
'GUUAM' in favour of a 'civilized divorce and opposition to the transformation of the CIS into a new union led by Russia with supra-national structures (Kuzio & Moroney 2001: 114). Though all GUUAM members restrict their activities within the CIS primarily to economic issues only, they backed a foreign policy strategy first outlined by Ukraine in 1996 of 'integration with Europe, cooperation with the CIS'. For this, the main vehicle of cooperation has been through NATO and bilaterally 'in the spirit of PfP' (Partnership for Peace) military cooperation with the UK, US, Germany, Poland and Turkey. Such a relationship has however buttressed the independence and sovereignty of GUUAM members and served to strengthen their maneuverability with the post-Soviet space, and in contrast contributed to the diminution of the stature of Russia and CIS in favour of Ukraine’s status within GUUAM, as well as of the Western Alliance.

Though economic necessity compelled Ukraine to come in terms with Russia in an agreement on the use of the two early warning stations based in Mucachevo and Sevastopol (which covered Europe and Mediterranean) at a cost of $4 million per annum, and was finally signed February 1997 (Wolczuk 2003: 61), there can be little doubt that Ukraine contributed to the unraveling of Tashkent treaty in two key ways. First, by adopting an oppositionist stance with no ostensible repercussions, Kiev modeled a position that was clearly appealing to other CIS members. Second, by remaining in steadfast opposition to the CIS of which GUUAM was the most powerful example (ibid: 61). Further, without Ukraine, a military union of CIS states was rendered meaningless. So, along with political integration, military integration was a key area in which Ukraine could reject Russian moves for greater ties with impunity.

Overall, so great were the tensions in the Ukrainian-Russian relationship from the very first days of the Commonwealth that according to the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev, the continued friction between Kiev and Moscow as regards military issues was affecting the stability of the CIS (RFE/RL in Wolczuk 2003: 61). The fact that the CIS failed to function effectively as a military alliance from here on ultimately undermined the credibility of the institution. This lack of credibility was amply demonstrated in April 1999 when owing to a refusal on the part of Azerbaijan Georgia
and Uzbekistan to sign a protocol to the treaty in order to prolong it, the Tashkent treaty effectively started to unravel.

3.3 Ukraine's Positive Policy and the CIS

From the above analysis it is clear that in order to protect its newly born independence Ukraine considered the CIS to be an opportunity not to sever existing links, but to strengthen bilateral relations to replace Soviet type centralism with a flexible system of mutual cooperation (Agreement on the Creation of the CIS, SWB 1991: C1/1). Therefore, Ukraine stands as the strongest critic of CIS when it finds any supranational competencies in its way of growth and development. But this does not mean that Ukraine has only played the role of a critic in the CIS. It has always supported the idea of legislation for facilitating intra-CIS relations on the basis of equality. For instance, it has supported the Electricity Generation Agreement signed at the February summit in 1992, the Declaration on the observance of the principles of cooperation within the framework of the CIS, a statement on the need to prevent the threat or use of force in the settlement of disputes, the agreement on space research, the agreement on cooperation in the field of culture, etc.

Most importantly, Ukraine is supportive of the CIS. It feels that it provides a good forum for the leaders to meet and discuss their mutual problems and difficulties. Often bilateral agreements are not enough. In the words of Kravchuk, "The leaders of the CIS should continue their common dialogue as they all need it, however, we should work out new principles" (Interview to the News Agency Interfax, 23 Dec. 1991). Ukraine also pointed out that the CIS has the potential conditions to become a useful consulting and coordinating system between the former Soviet republics during the current period of transition. To it, CIS is a means to avoid confrontation and to develop fruitful economic, cultural, political and personal ties based on mutual respect.

From the above analysis it can be concluded that dealing with Russian challenges, Ukraine because of its domestic realities and proximity to Russia, can not afford to have a hostile relationship with its Western neighbor. So also, as the recent history of Ukraine-
Russian interaction suggests, the interdependence and the similarity of the two Slavic countries make military confrontation, especially war, between them unthinkable. Thus, in spite of the existence of contentious issues and contradictions the worst scenarios in the development of Russian-Ukrainian relations have not thus far taken place. There has been no civil disorder or insurgency in eastern Ukraine or in Crimea, inspired or supported by Russia. Nor have there been threats of a full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine or even Russia-Ukrainian nuclear exchanges. Despite the aggressive rhetoric and recurrent tensions between the two countries, their unresolved disputes have not become fatally deadlocked i.e. Moscow and Kiev have not adopted extreme confrontational attitudes towards each other. But instead, during some of the crises over the Black Sea Fleet both sides have even appeared to be making trust-worthy efforts to avoid direct military confrontation.

Several factors have contributed to this aspect of the behavior of the two. Economic difficulties, weakness of state authority, and explosive domestic situations have produced a kind of mutual vulnerability in both the countries. As a result, Kiev and Moscow have shown a lot of understanding of each other’s internal difficulties. Ukraine, for its part, has firmly supported President Yeltsin during his domestic difficulties, except for the Chechen war.

In the international sphere both Russia and Ukraine have shown their understanding as they are parties to several international security and arms control agreements, which, despite all the difficulties with their implementation, have contributed to stability in security relations between the two countries. These include START I and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Furthermore, as the saga of Ukraine's denuclearization and signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty demonstrated, the US and the West have been able to serve as effective mediators in some Russian-Ukrainian disputes. For instance, in 1994 the Russian Federation joined with the US and the UK to give Ukraine assurances that Russia would respect Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty and existing borders and would not threaten the use of force or economic pressure against it.
So far as CIS is concerned, it may be said that the concept of Commonwealth is yet to take strong root in the former Soviet Union. This is so because of two contradictory tendencies. One tendency, which is supported by Russia, is to make the CIS a close-knit organization; the other, which is represented by Ukraine, seeks the CIS to be a loose nebulous organization. Thus, Russia and Ukraine, the two important members of the CIS tried to pull it in different directions. As a result, relations between Russia and Ukraine became strained and have cast their shadow over the CIS, and in consequence, the CIS failed to develop as an effective mechanism to solve any problem of CIS concern so effectively. Moreover, in spite of all this, Ukraine does not dare to leave the CIS as it will strain its relations with Russia, and its economy would be badly affected, and thus prefer to remain a member of the CIS and oppose the integrating attempts in the CIS at least so long as it is not in a position to deal with Russia on terms of equality.