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Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic Ambitions: Building an Effective Policy Coordination Process

◆ *“Joining Europe” today, be it preparing to enter the European Union or NATO, is an extraordinarily complex business*

◆ *Implementing a coherent policy of Euro-Atlantic integration requires a sound mechanism for inter-agency coordination*

◆ *Achieving a consensus among the Ukrainian leadership may become more difficult following constitutional changes to be implemented in 2006*

By Steven Pifer
with F. Stephen Larrabee, Jan Neutze, and Jeffrey Simon

As part of the non-governmental U.S.-Ukraine Policy Dialogue, the Atlantic Council of the United States (Washington, DC) and the Razumkov Centre (Kyiv) organized a task force on “Foreign Policy and National Security.” A key subject during the November 2005 task force meeting was interagency coordination. This report summarizes observations and recommendations by the task force’s American participants regarding the Ukrainian interagency coordination process for Euro-Atlantic policies.

Introduction

Since his inauguration in January 2005, Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko has repeatedly stated that his foremost foreign policy goal is his country’s integration into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. “Joining Europe” today, be it preparing a country for a bid to enter the European Union or NATO, is an extraordinarily complex business. It will require the development of a consensus on a Euro-Atlantic policy course among the country’s political leadership. It will also require an effective and coherent policy coordination structure. As the experience of other Eastern European countries has demonstrated, integration into the European Union or NATO is not just the responsibility of the foreign and defense ministries. It also requires coordination with the ministries of economy, justice, agrarian policy, transportation and communications, internal affairs – indeed, virtually every ministry in the Ukrainian Cabinet.

The necessary involvement of so many ministries poses a tough bureaucratic challenge. Defining and implementing a coherent policy of Euro-Atlantic integration requires a sound mechanism for interagency coordination that ensures that all ministries work in the same direction. In Ukraine's case, one of the weaknesses to date has been the lack of such a coordinating mechanism.

Integration into the European Union and NATO clearly tops President Yushchenko's foreign policy goals

Achieving a consensus on a Euro-Atlantic policy course among the Ukrainian leadership may become more difficult following constitutional changes to be implemented in 2006. These changes will grant the prime minister a significant degree of independence from the president as well as substantially expanded authority, resulting in a co-habitation system and thereby increasing the need for an effective mechanism that coordinates and integrates policy.

This paper describes the Ukrainian executive branch's system for coordinating Euro-Atlantic policy and identifies structural weaknesses. It offers recommendations as to how Ukraine can strengthen its internal structure for developing and carrying out a coordinated course of integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. While the focus of this paper is the management of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic policy, the observations may apply more broadly to coordination of other aspects of the country's foreign policy.

The Challenge: Euro-Atlantic Integration

Integration into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, i.e. the European Union and NATO, clearly tops President Yushchenko's foreign policy goals. Yushchenko set out his Euro-Atlantic agenda early in his tenure as president. Addressing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on January 25, 2005, just days after his inauguration, he made clear his desire for ultimate EU membership. On February 21, 2005 the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council agreed on a new EU-Ukraine Action Plan.

Yushchenko understands that reforms at home, in particular, institutionalizing democratic practices and building a robust market economy, are key

At a NATO-Ukraine summit on February 22, 2005, Yushchenko stressed his interest in joining the Alliance by means of a Membership Action Plan. On April 21, 2005 the foreign ministers of NATO and Ukraine launched an Intensified Dialogue on membership, typically the precursor to a Membership Action Plan. In parallel with this, NATO and Ukraine announced a range of initiatives to deepen cooperation in the context of the 2002 NATO-Ukraine Action Plan.

Yushchenko understands that reforms at home – in particular, institutionalizing democratic practices and building a robust market economy – are key to Ukraine's ability to draw closer to and ultimately join the European Union and NATO. Since he took office, there has been

significant if still incomplete progress on democratic reform. For example, the media in Ukraine today is free and not subject to the sorts of pressures common during the Kuchma years. While more remains to be done, Freedom House recognized Ukraine's progress in December 2005 by raising its rating from "partly free" to "free."

However, the record on economic reform during 2005 is not as strong. For the first eight months of the year, differences between Yushchenko and his first prime minister, Yuliya Tymoshenko, over such questions as reprivatization, price controls, and the state's overall role in economic matters prevented the pursuit of a coherent economic program and sent confusing signals to the foreign and domestic business communities. Yushchenko hoped to change this with his September 2005 appointment of Yuriy Yekhanurov as prime minister, Ukraine's twelfth prime minister in 14 years.

Successful policymaking requires integration of foreign and domestic policy

Domestic reforms are of key importance to the EU-Ukraine and NATO-Ukraine action plans. Successful policymaking requires integration of foreign and domestic policy, as well as economic and social policy with security and defense issues. Implementing the EU-Ukraine and NATO-Ukraine plans, and potentially NATO member agreements and/or the EU *acquis communautaire* in the future, will be a complex process. It will require consensus between the president and prime minister, as well as support from a working majority in the Rada. Moreover, there must be skilled coordination across the Ukrainian government. This requires a strong, accepted, and empowered interagency coordinating mechanism.

Goals of an Interagency System

A successful interagency process – be it in Ukraine, the United States, or a Western European country – needs to accomplish several tasks. In particular, it should:

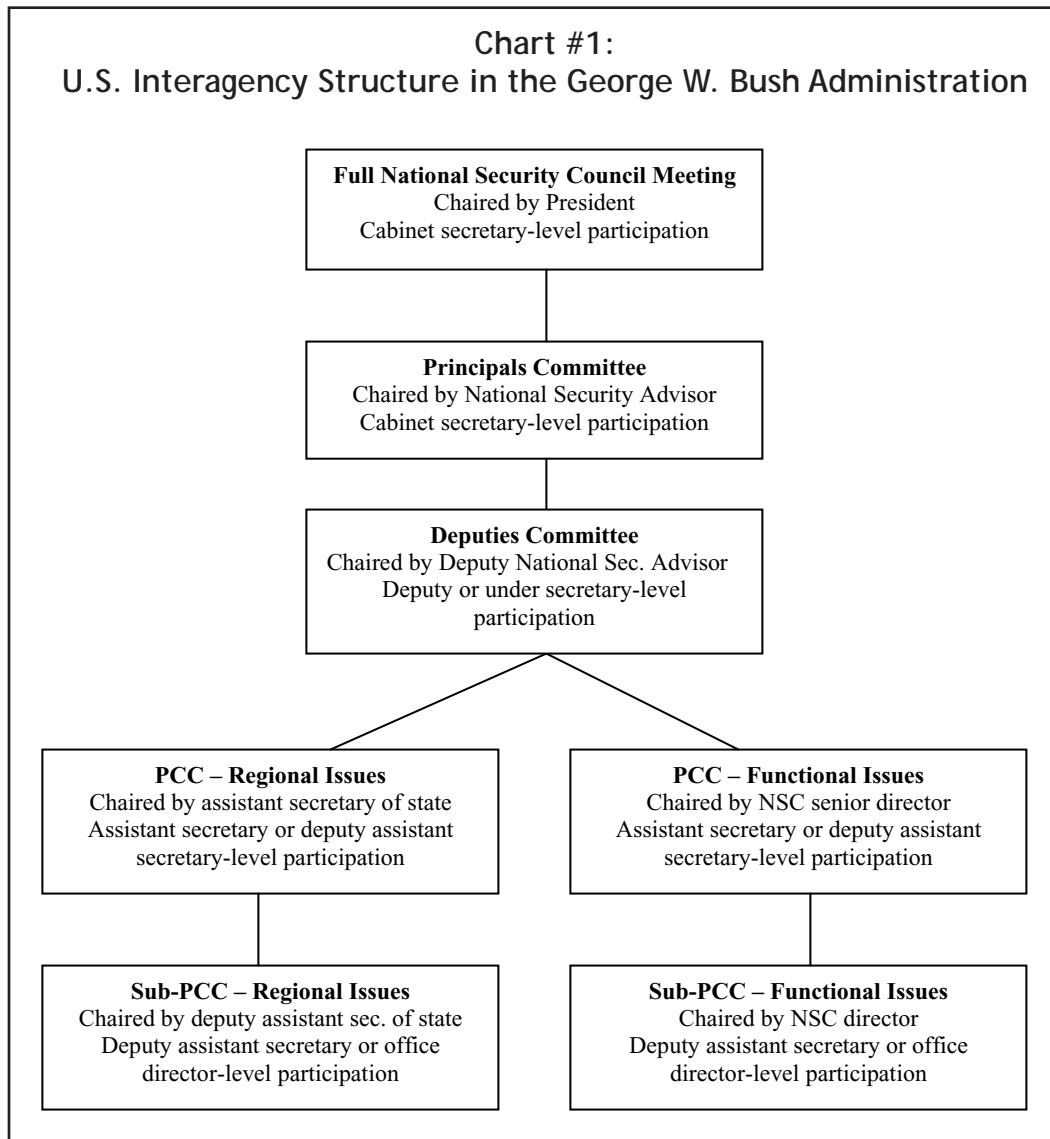
- Delineate clear lines of responsibility. Ministries and agencies should have an unambiguous idea as to which part of the interagency system is the venue for addressing a particular issue.
 - Give each ministry and agency that has an equity in a particular question an opportunity to present its policy view. Involving bureaucratic players in an inclusive process increases the prospects of securing bureaucratic "buy-in" to policy decisions, even if a ministry or agency's desired option ultimately is not chosen.
 - Present policymakers with the range of viable policy options in an even and balanced manner, without unduly skewing the field in favor of
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one recommendation or another. This helps to ensure that policymakers are able to make fully informed decisions.

- Be capable of monitoring implementation of policy decisions once taken. This provides for necessary follow-up and, if implementation lags, ensures that the senior leadership is made aware.
- Encourage resolution of interagency policy disputes at lower levels, preserving the time of senior leaders for resolving those issues that defy resolution. This also allows time for senior leaders to review major policy decisions that are agreed at lower levels but, because of their importance, require senior-level validation.

In the United States, interagency coordination is managed by the National Security Council staff. The NSC staff is headed by the national security advisor and is a part of the Executive Office of the President. (The structure of the U.S. interagency coordinating system is described below in Chart #1.) When the U.S. interagency system works properly, it accomplishes the five tasks described above.

- The structure, including regional and functional interagency groups, or policy coordinating committees (PCCs), is established and well known; when an issue arises, it is almost always clear at the outset which PCC has responsibility.
 - The membership of most interagency groups is inclusive, so that all departments or agencies with an interest in a particular national security issue generally participate in the relevant PCC. They thus have an opportunity to weigh in with their view.
 - When agencies differ, a range of options is forwarded to policymakers at the next higher level with a description of the pros and cons of each.
 - Interagency groups, usually at the PCC level, are used to monitor implementation of presidential policy.
 - The system tends to work issues first at lower levels, either in a PCC or sub-PCC. If agreement cannot be reached there, the issue is moved up the chain to the Deputies Committee and, if necessary, the Principals Committee. Sub-PCCs and PCCs often can reach interagency agreement, which preserves the time of more senior officials for tougher issues.
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Ukraine's Interagency System for Euro-Atlantic Issues

The executive branch mechanisms in Ukraine responsible for coordinating Euro-Atlantic integration have evolved since Yushchenko became president. However, they will have to evolve further to accommodate the constitutional changes approved in December 2004, which are being implemented in the first part of 2006. Those changes – described in greater detail on page 10 of this paper – will give the prime minister greater independence from the president and substantially expanded authority. Euro-Atlantic integration, to be pursued effectively, will then require a consensus between the president and prime minister.

The mechanisms responsible for coordinating Euro-Atlantic integration have evolved since Yushchenko became president, but need to evolve further

The National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) is, according to the Ukrainian constitution, the premier coordinating body for Ukrainian national security and defense issues. Article 107 of the constitution provides that the NSDC, under the chairmanship of the president, “coordinates and controls [monitors]” executive branch agencies in the area of national security and defense. Article 107 does not charge the NSDC with primary responsibility for coordinating foreign policy; the Foreign Ministry has that responsibility. The NSDC includes the prime minister; the ministers of defense, internal affairs, and foreign affairs; the head of the Security Service of Ukraine; and additional members appointed by the president. In December 2005, Yushchenko appointed Prosecutor General Oleksander Medvedko, Presidential Secretariat head Oleg Rybachuk, and Health Minister Yuriy Polyachenko to the NSDC.

The NSDC reports to the president but is separate from the presidential secretariat. The secretariat includes advisors to the president on both foreign policy and defense issues; they serve as the president’s personal staff on these issues, performing analytical work, making policy proposals, and assisting with coordination on foreign affairs, defense, and national security issues. For comparison, the primary functions of the U.S. NSC staff – coordinating interagency policy, ensuring implementation of presidential policy, and staffing the president – are performed in Ukraine by both the NSDC and the presidential secretariat.

The National Security and Defense Council is, according to the Ukrainian constitution, the premier coordinating body

The NSDC’s portfolio in reality extends well beyond traditional national security and defense issues. In April 2005, a senior NSDC official estimated that the Council’s staff spent about 50 percent of its time on national security, defense, and foreign policy issues, and 50 percent on domestic issues. The latter included administrative reform, the state budget, and reform of the energy sector. While this may have reflected in part the preferences of Petro Poroshenko, who was NSDC secretary from February-September 2005, the NSDC has in the past regularly involved itself on domestic matters, and will likely continue to do so under Anatoliy Kinakh, its current secretary and a former prime minister.

Beyond the NSDC, the Government Committee on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration is specifically tasked with coordinating Euro-Atlantic integration policy. This body was created to ensure that all parts of the executive branch were engaged on Euro-Atlantic integration, for example, by making sure that each ministry and agency’s budget request reflected Euro-Atlantic issues. The Government Committee comes under the Cabinet of Ministers and is charged with defining and implementing policies according to the strategy delineated by the Cabinet. The foreign minister chairs this committee, which also includes the ministers of defense, economy, internal af-

fairs, finance, and justice plus the head of the State Customs Service.

As of January 2006, the Cabinet of Ministers was considering proposing to the president the establishment of an Interagency Commission of National Coordinators for Euro-Atlantic Integration. This would be chaired by a deputy foreign minister, which would mean it would rank lower in the bureaucratic hierarchy than the Government Committee on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration. This body would focus on NATO-Ukraine issues; a series of interagency working groups, organized around key NATO questions and chaired by deputy ministers, would be subordinate to the Commission. However, it is not clear that the Interagency Commission would be directly subordinate to the Government Committee. In a November 2005 discussion, a senior Ministry of Defense official suggested that, while the Government Committee reports to the Cabinet of Ministers, the Interagency Commission might report to the president (presumably through the NSDC). Other Ukrainian officials have suggested the Commission would report directly to the Cabinet of Ministers, but not necessarily through the Government Committee.

Beyond the NSDC, the Government Committee on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration is specifically tasked with coordinating policy toward NATO and EU membership

The structure for coordinating Euro-Atlantic integration policy thus is not clear at this time. Adding to the mix, Yushchenko has signed decrees assigning the Foreign Ministry prime responsibilities for coordinating (as well as implementing) foreign policy. For example, a November 2005 decree gave the Foreign Ministry responsibility for coordinating measures taken by executive branch organs related to Euro-Atlantic integration. In addition, the legal basis for foreign policy-making is dated, as the underlying law is a 1993 Rada resolution "On the Basic Directions of Ukrainian Foreign Policy."

There has been some consolidation in the executive branch structure. Yushchenko eliminated the position of deputy prime minister for European integration that he had created in February 2005. Originally held by Rybachuk (currently the head of the presidential secretariat), the deputy prime minister position had responsibility for overseeing government-wide efforts to draw closer to the European Union, while the Foreign Ministry under Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk had the lead on issues related to NATO. The division was not clear-cut; the Foreign Ministry maintained important responsibilities for coordinating questions regarding the European Union.

The secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers' Department for European Integration reported to then-Deputy Prime Minister Rybachuk in February-September 2005. With the abolition of the deputy prime minister's position, the secretariat now comes under the Cabinet of Ministers, though its long-term status is unclear. In another consolidating move, Yushchenko

in November 2005 issued a decree abolishing the State Council on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine. The council had reported directly to the president, in parallel to rather than through the NSDC.

Although it goes beyond the scope of this paper, which focuses on executive branch mechanisms, the Rada, in particular its Foreign Affairs and European Integration Committees, also plays an important role on Euro-Atlantic integration policy. The executive branch will have to ensure good links to the Rada to facilitate Rada support and passage of legislation to advance Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic course.

The Ukrainian structure does not clearly delineate lines of responsibility and may also give the Foreign Ministry too much responsibility for interagency coordination

Weaknesses of the Current System

A comparison to the five tasks identified as necessary for an effective interagency coordinating system reveals a number of weaknesses in the Ukrainian system.

First, the Ukrainian structure does not clearly delineate lines of responsibility, creating confusion about which body is the appropriate venue for handling a particular problem. It appears that there will be a choice, at least between the Government Committee on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration and the Interagency Commission of National Coordinators for Euro-Atlantic Integration. And while the latter body, headed by a deputy foreign minister, appears to be junior to the former, headed by the foreign minister, it is not clear that the Commission would in fact be directly subordinate to the Committee. This raises the possibility of parallel, competing structures. Furthermore, it is not obvious how the work of these interagency bodies will relate to the Foreign Ministry's assigned coordination efforts. Unclear division of and/or overlapping responsibilities create possibilities for wasted time, policy disconnects, and even contradictory decisions.

Second, the current structure may also give the Foreign Ministry too much responsibility for interagency coordination. There is no question that the Foreign Ministry should lead on managing the implementation of foreign policy. Moreover, the apparent shift in relative weight for developing foreign policy from the presidential secretariat to the Foreign Ministry that took place during Yushchenko's first months in office is a prudent move for sensible policymaking. But it may be wiser for an overarching body such as the NSDC – rather than the Foreign Ministry, which is also an implementing agency – to have the broader responsibility for coordination among all ministries and agencies. It can be more difficult for a ministry, which is advocating its own preferred policy view, to ensure that all options are conveyed to senior leaders in a fair and balanced way.

Third, it is not clear whether the current structure provides all ministries and agencies that have an equity in a particular question the opportunity to present their views on that question. The Government Committee certainly includes key ministry and agency heads: the ministers of defense, economy, internal affairs, finance, and justice; the head of the customs agency; and the foreign minister. But will the Committee coordinate the Euro-Atlantic integration efforts of other ministries as well? These include such ministries as Agrarian Policy (a major issue for EU-Ukraine relations will be how Ukraine's agricultural sector relates to the European Union and its Common Agricultural Policy); Fuel and Energy (another major subject, highlighted by the recent Ukrainian-Russian gas dispute and its potential impact on gas flows to Western Europe); and Labor and Social Policy (given the growing harmonization of EU labor and social practices). These and other ministries need to be engaged as a normal part of the interagency coordination process, lest there be critical gaps in Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration effort.

It is not clear whether the current structure provides all ministries the opportunity to present their views or that it ensures that senior policymakers receive the full range of viable policy options

Fourth, there are questions as to whether the current Ukrainian structure is able to ensure that, when there is an interagency dispute, senior policymakers receive the full range of viable policy options presented in a balanced manner. The president will be the ultimate judge of the options that he receives and whether he is well-served. Much will depend on the NSDC secretary and his approach: will he treat all options evenly, or will his presentations prejudice the choice in favor of his own preference? During Poroshenko's tenure as NSDC secretary, the NSDC and Cabinet appeared to regard one another as competitors rather than collaborators in shaping government policy, reflecting the in-fighting between Poroshenko and Tymoshenko. The NSDC launched some initiatives with little coordination. For example, during spring 2005, the NSDC conceived and launched a new initiative to address the long-simmering Transnistria dispute in neighboring Moldova with little apparent input from the Foreign Ministry.

The Ukrainian system does not encourage the resolution of interagency policy disputes at lower levels of the bureaucracy

Finally, the Ukrainian system does not encourage the resolution of interagency policy disputes at lower levels of the bureaucracy, as the lowest-ranking mechanism operates at the deputy minister level. Senior Foreign Ministry officials have tried to devolve authority down to the level of department heads, but other ministries insisted that coordination take place at the level of deputy ministers. As a result, the Ukrainian system appears to have no equivalent to the PCC and sub-PCC structure in the U.S. model that would allow discussion of issues and preparation of policy options at levels below that of deputy minister and minister. This creates a situation in which deputy ministers (and their bosses) end up doing coordination work that could be accomplished at lower levels, preserving their time for other issues.

The Forthcoming Constitutional Changes

The Ukrainian interagency coordinating system will be further challenged by the constitutional changes that began to come into effect on January 1, 2006. These will significantly alter the balance of power between the president and the Rada, and the balance of executive power between the president and the prime minister. In both cases, the president's authority will be diminished.

Constitutional changes will significantly alter the balance of executive power between the president and the prime minister

This move away from the kind of super-presidency model that developed during the Kuchma years will introduce greater checks and balances into the Ukrainian government and political system. This could very well be a positive development for Euro-Atlantic integration, as evidenced by the experience of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that have recently joined NATO and the European Union after implementing major democratic and economic reforms. In most cases, parliament was the primary branch of government, as opposed to the super-presidency model more common in the former Soviet space.

Prior to the 2006 constitutional reforms, the Ukrainian president nominated the prime minister, who then had to be approved by the Rada, and the president appointed all ministers. When the constitutional changes take full effect with the March Rada elections, the Rada will choose the prime minister. In addition to acquiring independence from the president, the prime minister will have greater authority; he or she will appoint all ministers and senior agency heads except for the foreign and defense ministers, heads of the security service and National Bank of Ukraine, prosecutor general, and NSDC secretary. Thus, most ministers will be named by, and presumably be more beholden to, the prime minister.

Co-habitation between the president and prime minister will add a new layer of complexity to interagency coordination in Ukraine

This form of co-habitation between the president and prime minister will add a new layer of complexity to interagency coordination in Ukraine. For example, the constitution requires that many presidential decrees be countersigned by the prime minister and relevant minister. This presented little problem when the prime minister and ministers served at the pleasure of the president. And it presumably will present little problem if the new prime minister comes from Yushchenko's political party, Our Ukraine. That by no means is a given. Once the changes are in place, and if the Rada chooses someone other than a member of Our Ukraine to be prime minister, Yushchenko will need to find ways to secure the prime minister's support for his policy course and consent to presidential decrees. Absent a meeting of the minds on a Euro-Atlantic integration course between Yushchenko and the prime minister, this new power arrangement could prove a for-

mula for stalemate that no coordination mechanism could overcome.

Thus, a clear understanding on Euro-Atlantic integration issues between the president and prime minister will be even more important for a coherent policy course toward the European Union and NATO. One key element to implementing such an understanding is to have an effective structure in place for coordination between the president and prime minister, as well as among all the various ministries and agencies.

Recommendations

The weaknesses of the Ukrainian policy coordination system could well complicate Ukraine's ability to develop and implement a coherent approach to Euro-Atlantic institutions. The Ukrainian system will be further challenged once the prime minister gains greater independence and authority. Ukrainian officials should begin to consider now, even before the constitutional reforms are fully implemented and the Rada elections take place, how to reconfigure their structure to facilitate effective policy coordination on Euro-Atlantic issues. In particular, they should consider the following changes to the current policy coordination structure:

- **The National Security and Defense Council should be the senior policy-coordinating body for Euro-Atlantic questions.** It provides the logical mechanism for coordination between the president and the prime minister, as the NSDC is chaired by the president with the prime minister as a key member. When the NSDC considers Euro-Atlantic issues, membership on the body should be expanded to include all ministers who are involved in or affected by policies designed to draw Ukraine closer to the European Union and NATO. In terms familiar to Americans, an NSDC session would be the equivalent of a full National Security Council meeting chaired by the president.
- The Government Committee on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration should be retained, but the Ukrainians should consider two principal changes. First, **the Committee should be made subordinate to the NSDC rather than the Cabinet of Ministers**, as the Committee will have to prepare policy options and recommendations not just for the prime minister, but for the president as well (since he will still retain lead responsibilities in the foreign and security policy areas). Second, the Committee should be chaired by the NSDC secretary. Participation by ministries should be at the ministerial level. In U.S. terms, the Committee would then become the equivalent of the Principals Committee.

Ukrainian officials should begin thinking now how to reconfigure their structure

The NSDC should be the senior policy-coordinating body for Euro-Atlantic questions

To work issues at lower levels of the bureaucracy, the Ukrainians should regularize a set of interagency working groups

- **The Interagency Commission of National Coordinators for Euro-Atlantic Integration should be made directly subordinate to the Government Committee on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration.** It should be chaired by the senior deputy secretary of the NSDC. Ministries should participate at the deputy minister level. In U.S. terms, this would be the counterpart to the Deputies Committee.
- **To work issues at lower levels of the bureaucracy, the Ukrainians should regularize a set of interagency working groups subordinate to the Interagency Commission.** These should include groups addressing foreign policy issues; defense and security issues; economic, financial, and trade issues; justice, rule of law, and law enforcement issues; and health and social issues. Each group would be chaired by an NSDC official, with appropriate ministries represented by department heads or deputy heads (not all ministries would need to participate in all working groups; participation would be determined by subject matter). Most interagency coordination issues related to Euro-Atlantic integration should first be engaged at this level. These working groups could do preliminary coordination and preparation of policy options and thereby take some of the burden off of busy ministers and deputy ministers; in some cases, the working groups might resolve disputes and produce consensus. These would be the equivalent of the U.S. Policy Coordinating Committees.

With this structure, the advisors in the presidential secretariat for foreign policy and defense issues would continue to support the president on Euro-Atlantic integration policy, but they would shed responsibilities for coordinating interagency policy. They would stay in close contact with the NSDC secretariat as policy questions were developed, so that they could keep the president informed on major issues and ensure that presidential views were fed into the process.

Likewise, the Cabinet of Ministers' Department for European Integration would be a parallel group supporting the prime minister on foreign policy and defense issues. It would have no responsibilities for coordinating interagency policy, but would maintain close contact with the NSDC secretariat, keeping the prime minister informed and making sure that his or her views were fed into the policy process.

The structure outlined above for coordinating Euro-Atlantic integration (see Chart #2 on page 15) offers several advantages:

- It would eliminate the ambiguity and possible overlaps in the current Ukrainian system. Instead, it offers a clear hierarchy, in which policy issues move through a single, well-defined channel from one level to the next.
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- By regularizing a series of working groups, this structure would allow issues to be worked at levels below ministers and deputy ministers. Indeed, this is where most interagency coordination should take place, reserving the time of deputy ministers and ministers for major policy issues or those issues on which consensus cannot be achieved at the working level.
- This structure would provide a clear mechanism for coordinating policy between the president and the prime minister. Each would have his or her advisors to monitor the development of policy as it moved up from the working group level toward the NSDC. All relevant ministries would be involved at each level of the structure. And, for those issues that go all the way to a full NSDC meeting, both the president and prime minister would be taking part.

Some may see this structure as a diminution of the power of the Cabinet of Ministers, as the NSDC – viewed as “the president’s body” – would be the primary coordinating entity. Use of the NSDC makes sense, however, as the NSDC involves both the president and the prime minister, while the Cabinet will be responsible to the prime minister. All ministries, moreover, would be involved at all levels of the proposed coordination structure. The president as chair of the NSDC might appear to have a stronger position than the prime minister, who is only a member of the NSDC. However, the constitutional requirement that the prime minister and relevant minister countersign presidential decrees and the prime minister’s authority over most ministers provide a *de facto* check on presidential power.

For this structure to work, it will be important that the NSDC secretary be committed to presenting policy options in a fair and balanced way. He or she must be, and must be seen to be, playing the role of “honest broker.” It will also be important to ensure that the NSDC’s secretariat, as well as the Euro-Atlantic offices of the various ministries, are staffed with people who understand what a Euro-Atlantic course requires of Ukraine. It is not enough to aspire to be “European.” One must grasp the principles, values, and processes that that entails. There is a small but growing cadre of such experts in Ukraine; they need to be empowered.

Moreover, making the working groups effective will require a substantial change in Ukrainian government culture, which currently is run “top down.” There will need to be a conscious effort to encourage initiative, innovation, and decision-making at lower levels. Some senior officials will likely resist this, fearing loss of their own authority, but it is essential if Ukraine wishes to have a more efficient and effective process.

For this structure to work, it will be important that the NSDC secretary be committed to presenting policy options in a fair and balanced way

Making the working groups effective will require a substantial change in Ukrainian government culture

Conclusion

Without such a structure, “joining Europe” will prove a slower, more cumbersome and painful process than should be the case

“Joining Europe” will require that the president and prime minister have a common vision on Euro-Atlantic integration issues. It also will require that there be in the new Rada a supportive coalition that shares this vision and can command a regular majority to approve necessary legislation. And “joining Europe” will require support from a growing segment of the Ukrainian public; neither the European Union nor NATO will consider ultimately taking Ukraine in without evidence that membership has the support of a sizeable segment of the Ukrainian people. The experience of the Central and Eastern European states serves as an important reminder in this regard. All of them enjoyed a parliamentary and national consensus on the strategic objectives of joining NATO and the European Union, a consensus that has yet to coalesce in Ukraine.

Forging a common vision on Euro-Atlantic integration, ensuring that that vision is translated into the myriad policy decisions that must be taken, and then following up on the implementation of those decisions requires a defined, robust, and empowered interagency coordinating structure. The structure suggested in this paper would help to implement a viable interagency coordination process in Ukraine on Euro-Atlantic issues. The Ukrainian government should consider these recommendations, ideally before the Rada elections, as the country after the ballot will be (rightly) focused on government formation. Without such a structure, even if the president and prime minister see eye-to-eye on Euro-Atlantic integration following the March elections, “joining Europe” will prove for Ukraine a slower, more cumbersome and painful process than should be the case.

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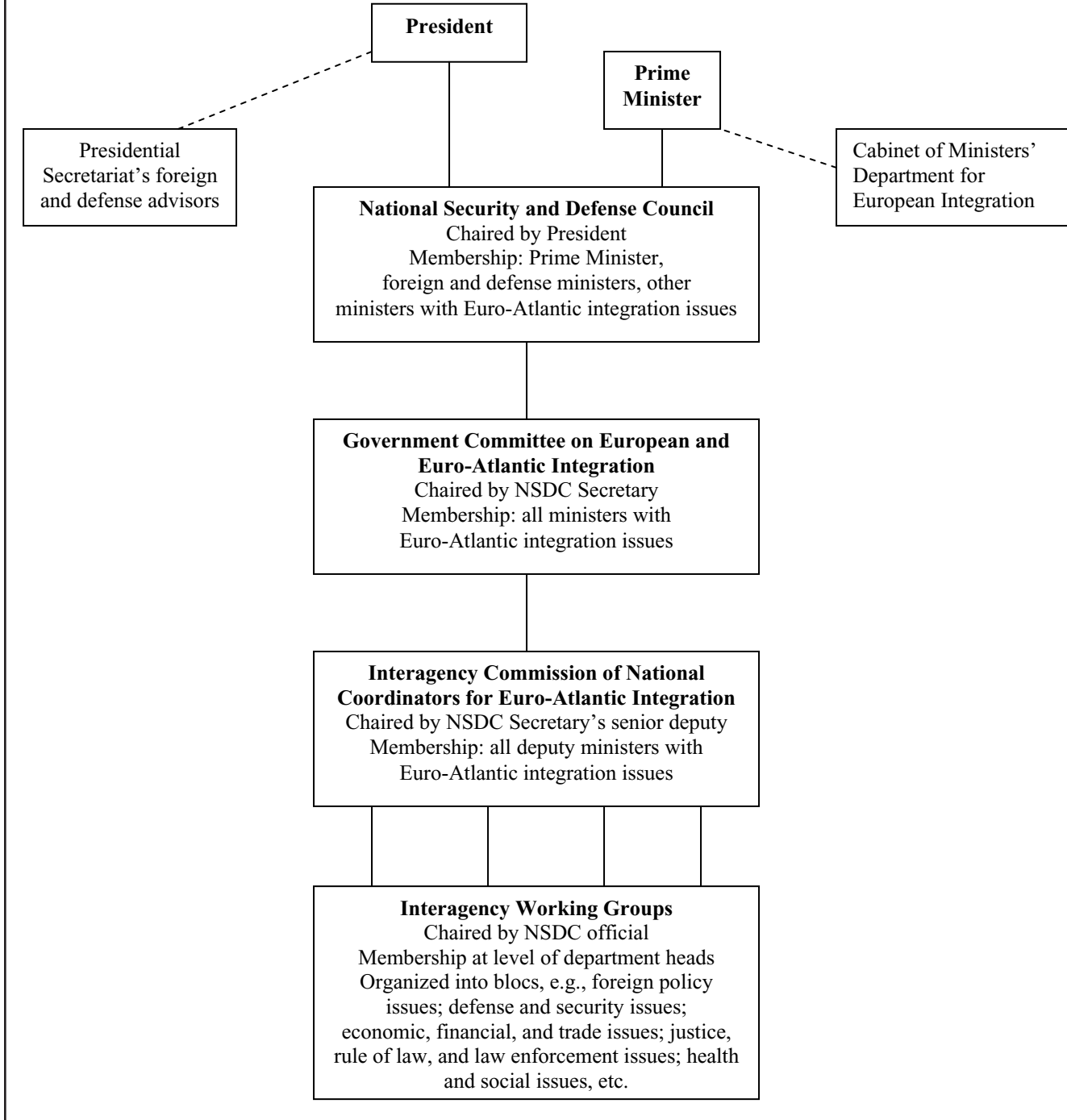
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Chart #2:
Proposed Structure for Coordinating Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic Integration Policy



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