

Click to read: A roadmap for Ukraine's integration into transatlantic structures - NATO Defence College Occasional Paper No 16, June 2006.

The paper focuses on the state of Ukraine's relations with the North Atlantic Alliance, the Ukraine perspective of the Alliance and the influence of Ukraine/Russia relations, as well as the challenges in reforming and adjusting its political, economic and military sectors. The paper goes into a lot of detail at quite low levels and draws a number of conclusions that warrant a more robust argument and consideration of wider influences.

A roadmap requires the defining of a start point, the end objectives and the way of progressing from one to the other. A significant part of this paper is taken up with post-Cold War history and the effects of the Orange Revolution and that serves to define the start point. The ultimate objectives are spelt out in general terms as being membership of the EU and NATO as well as developing friendly relations with Russia. What is lacking is a well thought through set of steps to give structure and detail to achieve those objectives i.e. the roadmap. In terms of NATO membership five key issues have been identified. Unfortunately, although the issues are reasonably well explored in terms of what needs to be achieved, how to attain these aspirations is not addressed. Reforms in democratising the state since the Orange Revolution have been successful to a degree but the claims are all couched in relative terms that denies knowledge of the real progress made towards the aims of the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan. Economic reform has been dogged by the extended recession post-independence and again the three concerns of the Action Plan, economic growth, accession to the WTO and improving the security of energy supplies are well explained but lack any future direction for resolution. Although reform in the defence and security sectors has been greater than the political and economic sectors, the Ukraine is experiencing considerable difficulties particularly in introducing reorganisation. The aims of the Action Plan will not be met until the general lack of funding that underlies all these concerns is addressed but again there is no indication as to how the necessary finance will be generated.

The paper does highlight the ambiguous visions of NATO by the Ukrainian people, as against their leadership, partially due to a general lack of information on NATO being available and partly to political groups who are opposed to NATO membership. The influence of Russia is a clear factor here although the paper fails to recognise the

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extent of the political blackmail possibilities that Russia has recently indulged in relations with Eastern European countries because Ukraine is totally dependent upon Russia for its energy supplies. There is little doubt that Russia sees Ukrainian membership of NATO as a threat to Russian security and as Georgia and Moldova are following a similar path, Russia may well attempt to recreate a sphere of influence throughout the CIS using energy as a lever. The paper has made a weak

attempt to assess the effect of such an action but has not faced up to the major issues that could develop.

This title of this paper is not particularly accurate and will disappoint those who expect to see a definitive roadmap for Ukraine to meet the aims of the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan. In summary, it identifies the problems and concerns