



Anxious to register Western recognition and support, we in Ukraine, as well as our corresponding partners in the CIS, at first underestimated the necessity to attribute special attention to preserving and restructuring relations with the other former Soviet Republics. We took them for granted, which we should not have done. Later the situation was corrected - as the latest example one can cite the ratification by our Parliament of the friendship and cooperation agreements with Lithuania and Moldova. We view the CIS as an international vehicle for multilateral consultations and negotiations, which acts in addition to bilateral relations of the FSU Republics.

Crucial here, however, have been and continue to be our relations with Russia. Swift Russian moves to grasp the S.C. seat, to appropriate all Union bodies in Moscow, to take all the Soviet property abroad, to appropriate all FSU assets and force a zero option upon others, and the attempt to try to leave military control on the territory of the CIS countries in the hands of Moscow arouse suspicion and resistance. By the end of 1992, these efforts as a whole revealed themselves as an attempt to preserve or revive the late empire under a new title. Though the empire was dead, the imperial ideology was not. It is natural: some states, having lost their empire, were for years waging fruitless wars before it was brought home to them that what's over is over. By the economic cohesion (70% of

our economy has its market in Russia) and instigation of separatist tendencies, by daily undiplomatic behaviour of Russian TV, which is widely watched throughout Ukraine, by decrees on Sevastopol of the Russian Parliament, and by statements of its leaders -- Rutskoï, Sobchak, Shaposhnikov, Grachev, Kosyrev, and Yeltsin, by these self-appointed peacemakers and defenders of the rights of Russian-speaking populations everywhere (with the possible exception of the Brighton Beach in Brooklyn), we were soon made to understand that the Empire is striking back.

So, what is accepted by the "far abroad" the "nearest abroad" questions now: is it true that the Soviet Union was dissolved in December 1991, or maybe it just shrank to the size of the Russian Federation? I would like to be mistaken in this assumption I cannot but have doubts -- seeing that they have given the word of honour to cross out from its constitution forever words about sovereignty for the peoples of the Federation and preparing "confederation" for the CIS countries. Yuriy Afanasyev - a prominent figure of the Perestroika period, writes on page 23 in the latest issue of the "Foreign Affairs" magazine:

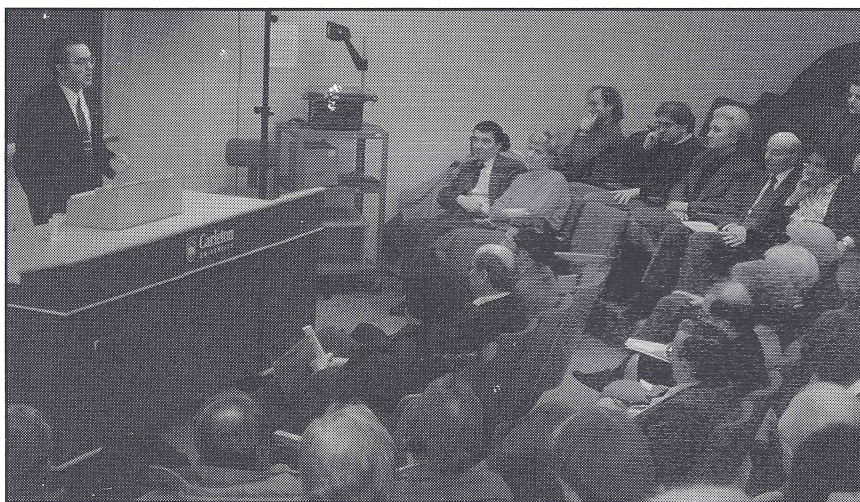
"Great-power ideology is now openly espoused by some as a part of official state policy... The new military doctrine of asserting interests in the "near abroad" is fuelling more blatant attempts to subordinate former Soviet republics... at

gigantic expense to Russia, economic pressure is being used to force former Soviet republics to join the Commonwealth of Independent States".

Of course, nobody expects expressions of love from those whom he left, slamming the door behind him. But when one reads that the rate of inflation in Ukraine is second only to that in war-ravaged former Yugoslavia he wonders: does it not mean that Ukraine is also living under the conditions of war - an undeclared economic "Cold War" with Russia? And the temptation to use this pressure will continue as long as 80 % of our energy resources will come from one pipe. We may achieve real independence only through interdependence. Only when we have an option of trading partners will the country which has 70% to 80% weight on our market be tempted to give us equal treatment. Opposing imperial designs, Ukraine has been resisting attempts to institutionalize the CIS, to turn it into a supernational federation or confederation.

I'm being frank with you! Official Kyiv is not engaged in depicting this aspect of our relations in any precise detail. Why? Because we know the rule: don't trouble. Or, as our premier, Mr. L. Kuchma, has put it: "Each and every anti-Russian political statement results in an anti-Ukrainian economic deed".

But faced with Russia's persistent policy aimed at destabilizing the newly independent states from outside, its demands for recognition of a special peace-keeping role for Russia in the CIS area, for establishment of "spheres of influence" or of special interest - the Ukrainian leadership has been forced to react. Especially after the last elections in Russia. As an example of such a reaction, I should mention the recent Kyiv declaration by President Kravchuk of Ukraine, and President Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan. On January 20, without mentioning any names, they drew the attention of the peoples of the CIS and of the international community at large to the necessity to unite efforts in order to rebuff the further spreading of ideas based on the propaganda of fascism,



Ambassador Victor Batyuk addresses an enthusiastic Carleton University audience.