

# **EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT FORMS OF SELF- DETERMINATION AS GEOPOLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE FORMATION OF UKRAINE'S LOCAL POLICY (1994 – 2004)**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of the article is to demonstrate open and hidden forms of external influence on Ukraine's domestic policy on the example of regional claims for self-determination. The major problem is that the Russian language issue, difficulties in boundary delimitation and the lack of information strategy in Ukraine's foreign policy resulted in an explicit and implicit influence on the political situation in Ukraine in 1994 - 2004. The analysis of the problem covers the times of L. Kuchma's presidency and has been undertaken on the basis of materials of the Ukrainian press of that time. The content analysis helped to track the reflection of Ukrainian society at the challenges of that time and discover the technologies of influence.

**Key words:** *V. Yanukovych, Donetsk, Constitution of Ukraine, Crimea, L. Kuchma, Odesa, Russia*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since Ukraine has started to intensively assert and embed national symbols inside the country, Russia began to more intensively demonstrate its expansion towards Ukraine. The euphoria about the idea that the linear type of post-communist countries' development will change the vector of totalitarianism into a liberal political regime ended up after the first years of independence, especially during L. Kuchma's rule. A tough domestic national policy of the Baltic countries, oligarchic influence on the formation of the political system in Ukraine, the clanship of the former Asian republics and Russia's post-communist imperial syndrome – all these factors had demonstrated that Ukraine had its own path of development, in

which an important role belonged to the regional elite, the problem of identity and the level of conflicts inside the country.

The regional elite, as agents influencing socialization, used publicity and became the bearers of narratives and leaders of local myths. This provoked the bicultural identity, as a permanent traumatization of Ukrainians in the East and South, which became the main reason for the breakup of regions. Thus, the manifestations of Russian nationalism could not help appearing in regions where the public consciousness received regular portions of "Russian World". Binary confrontations of bicultural identity have excluded the existence and perception of the Other in the regional dimension as a friend because the rhetoric of the local elite was based not on tolerance, but on hostility.

The problem of consolidation of the Ukrainian nation through the prism of regional factors is studied by Ukrainian scholars: K. Vitman, I. Kresina, M. Polovyi, L. Nagorna, T. Nagornyak, M. Ryabchuk, T. Tatarenko, and others. It is commonly known that the cultural level of elites affects the image of the region's identity. That's why it is very important for the Ukrainian elite to have a common, joint set of value markers that would have been implemented in the political space, where the political system itself had been set for the consolidation, recognition, and reduction of the risk of conflicts. "Under such conditions, a lot of issues depend on the elites: they must not only clearly define promising goals with regard to "cultural codes", but also be able to maneuver and negotiate, carefully monitoring the rivalry of cultural discourses and building a strategy of mutual understanding and concerted actions. The new face of regionalism, revitalization of marginal groups resulted in a search for a new dimension of social theory - based precisely on the conceptualization of identity politics", - states a Ukrainian scholar L. Nagorna [Nagorna L. 2011: 92].

In case of the low and conflicting level of "cultural codes," the concept of identity is not one-dimensional, that leads to conflicts in which the level of the hierarchy dominates over the dialogue of understanding. Thus, they become managed not only by the regional elite but also by external impulses of intervention. The political analyst Tetiana Tatarenko claims that regional identity has its own factors that shape the community. This includes the possession and use of the territory, social ties, the system of values, social institutions. "Territorial identity, as a rule, is stable, however, changes in the organization of space and collective ideas about the prospects of development stipulate changes in identity, the creation of new communities or the loss of identity", - the scholar states [Tatarenko T. 2009: 52]. Intentions to integrate with Russia, new information campaigns that enhanced the feeling of shared historical memory with Russia, political preferences for the Russian language - all these created conditions in which the identified space transformed into the identified territory. Mykola Ryabchuk in his work "Two Ukraines: real borders, virtual games" stresses that the historical heritage left to Ukraine: totalitarian and colonial, was very well exploited by the ruling elites, which "not just were uninterested to overcome it, but, on the contrary, effectively used it to legitimize their highly questionable reign and cultivate an ambivalent, anomic non-civil society" [Ryabchuk M. 2002: 97].

Therefore, the following events that took place in Ukraine after L. Kuchma's presidency were the result of the breakdown of the "cultural codes" that were represented by the regional elite and increased the conflict of the bicultural identity of Ukrainians, primarily in the East and South of Ukraine. K. Vitman,

studying the issues of ethno-national policy during 2010 - 2011, indicates the ineffectiveness of this policy in Ukraine, which was not ready to resist interethnic contradictions. Among the reasons that have been accumulating in Ukraine over the years, the scholar names “the regulation of migration processes, the integration of migrants, the development of xenophobia and introduction of responsibility for the manifestation of ethnic intolerance, dual nationality, the status of national minorities” [Vitman K. 2011: 604]. Hidden forms of regions' self-determination during the reign of L. Kuchma are those examples that complicated the strategy of ethnic policy and intensified internal conflicts of regional inhabitants. The weak will of the Ukrainian authorities and the increased hidden interference of external factors on the country have become that deterministic chaos, described by another Ukrainian researcher Mykola Polovyi. Analyzing the conflict between the state and society of the 2013-2014 period, T. Nagorniak emphasizes that “the community in the global cities has specific features. It is multicultural, prone to self-development as to a part of its own business strategy. This community is a carrier of corporate culture and post-industrial values of an open information society. The territorial and supranational identity of communities of such cities reduces the national. Residents of global cities are more likely to feel like the citizens of the world, than as a part of national sovereignty” [Nagorniak T. 2015: 203].

Studies of political conflicts that have found their classification in the works of R. Dahrendorf, M. Doych, G. Simmel, L. Koser, and S. Huntington were intensified by Ukrainian researchers by the study of political conflicts in Ukraine. The scholars paid their attention to these three factors: the conflict of values, the conflict of interests and the conflict of identity. Y. Druk, H. Zhekalo, I. Kiyanka, M. Prymush, S. Yaremchuk, investigating political conflicts as a conflict of identification, emphasized the role of national minorities who initiate a conflict at a common ethnic homeland that they see as their own. Hanna Zhekalo distinguishes three determinant groups that categorize political conflicts in Ukraine: participants to a conflict, the nature of a conflict and qualitative characteristics of a conflict [Zhekalo H. 2015: 164-165]. Researching the events in Ukraine in 1994-2004, we focus on a non-violent form of conflicts, which, in comparison with the violent form, has hidden forms of influence.

The history of L. Kuchma's presidency has many examples of the formation of authoritarian power. And some of them turned out to be fateful for Ukraine's future, namely in the issue of prevention of the country's split. Presidential balancing between Europe and Russia raised hopes in the separatist circles, which at that time did not openly talk about separation from Ukraine, as it was before and after the Kuchma's era. On the other hand, the political behavior of Dmytro Tabachnyk, the Head of the Presidential Administration, and his ability to resolve tasks by turning opponents against each other contributed to political stabilization in the Crimea. Scrappiness, uncertainties, making advances to both Europe and Russia, led the country not only to internal conflicts but helped the neighboring countries to exert influence. And such moves as granting official language status for Russian at the regional level laid the foundation of a long-term problem, which 10 years later turned into the war.

## 1. «TATARS! GET OUT FROM THE CRIMEA»

During 1994 presidential elections Crimean population gave 90% of votes for Kuchma. The President of the ARC Yuriy Meshkov had campaigned for Kuchma and expected certain preferences from him. But when he did not receive them, the anti-Ukrainian sentiments emerged in Crimea. The Sevastopol City Council announced the Russian status of the city. But gradually another confrontation emerged in Crimea: between Parliament Speaker Sergiy Tsekov and President Y. Meshkov, which ended up when they "dissolved" each other. Ratings of both branches have decreased sharply and when one branch of power issued laws against the other. In a result, Ukrainian Special Forces carried out a brilliant operation involving the detention of Yuriy Meshkov and his departure to Moscow. On February 24, 1994, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine issued a resolution "On the Status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in accordance with the current Constitution and legislation of Ukraine", where paragraph 3 stated: "The Verkhovna Rada of the Republic of Crimea, within a month's time, shall bring the Constitution and other legislative acts of the Republic of Crimea in accordance with the Constitution and legislation of Ukraine" [The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. About the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea]. And a year later, on March 17, 1995, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine issued a resolution "On the Autonomous Republic of Crimea" (No. 95/95-VR), where the name of the Republic of Crimea was replaced by the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and the post of its president was liquidated [The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Law on Autonomous Republic of Crimea]. But, despite the decisive steps taken by Ukrainian authorities, it was impossible to prevent speculations on the Crimean question. In the Crimea itself, the image of the enemy was being persistently formed from the Crimean Tatars, which by that time composed 13% of the population of the peninsula. Locals saw them simply as strangers. And local politicians have traditionally declared the so-called "Tatar danger" that threatened the whole Ukraine. For example, in September 2003, communist Leonid Grach spoke of the fact that in the Crimea, under the cover of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, Wahhabi centers had operated and prepared militants for the war in Chechnya [Correspondent 2003 №48(87): 24].

After opposition parties' victory in the parliamentary races, the Russian Federation actively began to intervene in Ukraine's internal affairs in the Crimea. In 2004, Russian parliamentarians adopted the law "On Citizenship of the Russian Federation", which allowed all residents of Crimea who were born in the peninsula to acquire Russian citizenship. In the straightforward commentary of Mikhail Vydrin, the Russian Vice-Consul in the Crimea, it was stated that "getting the Russian passport instead of the Ukrainian is mostly a desire of elderly people. They have a strong wish to feel connected with the already non-existing state, many of whom believed that Russia was its successor. This created the illusion of a return to the past, to the ideals of youth, and compensated for the considerable complexity and time expenditures associated with changing passports. In addition to nostalgia, the fact that the Russian pension (about \$ 60) was several times bigger than the Ukrainian one (\$ 25) was also not the least important factor" [Correspondent 2004 №4(93): 22].

Since 1996 the pressure on the Crimean Tatar population has intensified. As the newspaper *Ukraina Moloda* wrote, one of the houses in Simferopol had a call: "Tatars, get out from the Crimea". And almost simultaneously a memorable sign

for the victims of the deportation of the Crimean Tatar people was destroyed [Ukraina moloda 1996 2(418): 3]. No one bore responsibility for an insult to the history of this people, though there were examples of punishment for such vandalism. Even then, Igor Krot, an assistant to the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Crimea, during a meeting in Simferopol distributed leaflets with a caricature image of the President of Ukraine with a bold swastika. For this, he was called to pay a fine of 2 million 400 thousand coupon-karbovanets. And in March 1996, 25 years old Y. Vorobets was sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment under articles 187 (abuse of state symbols) and 206th (hooliganism) of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, because he, in the premises of the village council, tore up and burnt the state flag of Ukraine, as a negative attitude to the authorities" [Ukraina moloda 1996 №18(434): 3].

Returning to the issue of Crimean Tatars, it should be noted that people were given the right to return to their homeland, but they did not receive citizenship. And as non-citizens, they did not have the right to land share. It was the attitude of central Ukraine to the Crimea that was ambiguous. This territory was perceived as a tourist place which is quite dangerous. *Ukraina Moloda* was forming the image of criminal Crimea. In 1998, many articles about murder were published. For example, the article on the murder of the first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of Crimea, a candidate for the people's deputies of Ukraine Oleksandr Safontsev was published under the title "Do not Give Crimea to Mafia" [Ukraina moloda 1998 №38(860): 3]. And on March 14, 1998, an article and a photo with the inscription: "Moskal destroyed the hardest gangs of Crimea" were printed [Ukraina moloda 1998 №49(871): 1].

Local authorities contributed to the intensification of conflicts in Crimea even in the establishment of monuments. In 1999, when the Crimean Tatars intended to open a monument to human rights defender Petro Grygorenko, the Soyuz party began preparations for the establishment of a monument to Catherine II next to the monument of Grygorenko. For Crimean Tatars, it was a public disgrace to their history, as far as the annexation of Crimea took place on the orders of Catherine II.

## **2. POST-SOVIET HYSTERIA IN THE SOUTH AND EAST OF THE COUNTRY**

The southern region of the country more radically manifested itself in Odesa, where the struggle between odious figures R. Bodelan and Y. Gurvits became a convenient pretext for Russian intervention. The Odesa port, the geographical proximity to the artificial Transnistrian republic, and Russian language contributed to the imposition of interests of the post-Soviet empire, as in the days of Leonid Kuchma, so in 2014. At that time, the majority of deputies in the Odesa City Council by 58 votes in favor (1 abstained and 1 against), supported the initiative of the mayor Ruslan Bodelan "On the introduction of trilingualism - Ukrainian, Russian and foreign languages in Odesa" [Ukraina moloda 2001 №190 (1753): 3]. And if the concept of a "foreign language" for the national communities in the region was understood differently, the Russian has been the main working language for a long time after this decision. The introduction of the third language at the level of "foreign" was a cover for the Russian language. Since document management in the offices of officials was carried out neither in Bulgarian nor in Romanian.

The situation in Donetsk, as in Crimea, with a nostalgic past, Russian language and neighborhood with Russia, was widely exploited by political consultants during

Kuchma's election campaigns. The population was offered what it wanted to hear. Therefore, responsibility for the cultivation of communist ideals and the adoption of separatists decisions of city councils lies on political candidates themselves, who at that time held their campaign there. For example, in the course of Kuchma's election campaign in 1998, the idea of creating special economic spaces for the introduction of a special investment regime was heard. Of course, the President understood that in this region such a statement would increase the supporters of his candidacy.

When in 1995 in Crimea there were considerably fewer activities in support of the Russian language, the situation in Donetsk was loosening up and, first of all, due to the left parties. A note in *Dzerkalo Tyzhnia* of 1995 stated that the deputies of the Donetsk City Council intended to claim the status of "working" for Russian. "Among the demands of the picketers: state language status for Russian along with the Ukrainian, the Soviet Union, Ukraine - in the economic union with the CIS, protection of councils, the socialist path of development to Ukraine, etc." [*Dzerkalo tyzhnja* 1995 №2 (15): 2]. At the Mariupol city council, a decision was taken to grant the Russian language the status of a working one.

Covering the events of the fall of 2000, when protests from the Donetsk population took place on the eve of the October Revolution, the newspaper *Ukraina Moloda* indicated the demands of the protesters: to lower prices for main food products, to reduce tariffs for housing and communal services, to give the Russian language official status, to return the 7th of November to Calendar. "From the editorial board. It seems that Donetsk, or rather a certain part of its population, is once again experiencing a boom in "post-Soviet" hysteria. The events of two weeks ago have not been forgotten because the same pensioners went out on the street of Donetsk to demand not so much bread as ... the return of youth. Then, let's remind, leaders of law enforcement agencies of the region stated that criminal cases will be launched against the organizers of "hooligan picketing of the regional council". The people are pushed to it. Someone gathers people for pickets and then says that "they are an unmanageable mass" [*Ukraina moloda* 2000 №166(1486): 3]. Incidentally, in this same article, the SPU and the Communist Party of Ukraine were mentioned as the organizers of the protests.

On November 11, 2000, the same newspaper published an article titled "Donetsk language reached Kyiv". It was about a session of the Donetsk Regional Council, which "extraordinary celebrated" the Day of Ukrainian Writing and Language. The issue on the functioning of the Russian language was included in its agenda. "Acting on the basis of Article 10 of the Constitution of Ukraine, which guarantees the free development and protection of the Russian language, Donetsk citizens do not hide their worry and concerns. After all, "according to available information", the statement read, bills were being prepared in parliamentary committees able to restrict the constitutional rights of Russian-speaking residents of the region" [*Ukraina moloda* 2000 №209(1529): 3].

Since 2002, the so-called "Donetsk group" has been forming among politicians of various levels. According to the Head of the Institute of Politics, People's Deputy Mykola Tomenko, from the summer of 2002, the Donetsk group has been rapidly gaining political weight. The Donetsk group was not a separate party; it was a regional factor that helped people from this region to work with any political force. "For them, the minimum task was: Donetsk should manage its own region

independently. The maximum task was: decision-making at the state level" [Correspondent 2002 №15: 16].

At the end of L. Kuchma's presidency when Maidan called to support Viktor Yushchenko's bloc "Our Ukraine", Donetsk became a place which concentrated political forces that were against it. "I will never betray you, I will always go with you. And what you accept will be the law for me". With such words, Viktor Yanukovich addressed to deputies who gathered in Severodonetsk on November 28, 2004. On this day a decision had been taken to hold a referendum on the issue of the territorial organization of the country. As the *Correspondent* wrote: "Even bolder it was expressed on the sidelines: to create a Novorossiia republic as part of Russia headed by Moscow mayor Yuriy Luzhkov" [Correspondent 2004 №46(135): 32-33]. Although most politicians believed that this move would split the country, while the Prosecutor General's Office and the Security Service of Ukraine even initiated criminal proceedings about encroachments on the territorial integrity of the state, on January 9, 2005t the Donetsk Regional Council decided to hold a referendum "On granting Donetsk region a status of an independent subject of federation within Ukraine". Characteristically, that former head of the headquarters of Viktor Yanukovich, Sergiy Tigipko said that he was ashamed that "we split Ukraine with our campaign" [Correspondent 2004 №46(135): 32-33]. The politician meant not only his former team but also the headquarters of Viktor Yushchenko. The permanent division of the country into the East and West in the 2004 election race was symbolized in the images of Western "fascists" and eastern "criminals". And the policy of power redistribution of the budget in favor of regional donors has caused a relatively uneven development of the country's regions.

### 3. TECHNOLOGIES OF INFLUENCE

From the first days of his presidency in 1994, L. Kuchma promised to grant Russian language the constitutional status. He saved his word. According to Article 10 of the new Constitution of Ukraine, adopted on June 28, 1996, the status of the Ukrainian language as the only state language was fixed; the free development and use of the Russian language were guaranteed together with other languages of national minorities. But the excessive attention to this issue had led to the fact that the state Ukrainian language in Ukraine was quite limited. In 2001, the chairman of the State Committee for Information Policy, Television and Radio Broadcasting Ivan Drach at the parliamentary hearings said: "A little more than 2.5 thousand newspapers are registered as Ukrainian-language; the rest, more than 7 thousand, are Russian and bilingual and in fact they are Russian-language. The situation has developed in such a way that foreign mass media have better conditions for functioning and distribution within the state than domestic ones" [Savchenko O. 2001: 9]. The same situation took place on television. Entertainment shows and films were broadcast in Russian. Information influence from Russia at the level of promotion of its interests through Ukrainian air channels covering all of Ukraine, shaping certain sentiments and values of Ukrainian society, which were combined with Russian, was one of the priorities of Russia. According to Igor Losev, the Russian Federation used two variants of political influence against Ukraine:

- 1) the tactics of "salami" - tactics of "small steps aimed at absorbing some elements of Ukrainian statehood" [Losev, I. 2001: 51]. Formally being in Ukraine, small territories were created to promote Russian interests. As an example, the

scientist points to the city of Sevastopol, through which Russia has "perfect conditions for intervention in the internal affairs of Ukraine because of the presence of Russian troops" [Losev, I. 2001: 52]. Besides, there was no Ukrainian-language school, and there was only one Russian-language school that was subordinated to the Ministry of Defense of Russia [Losev, I. 2001: 52]. Therefore, the influence of Russian-language channels exploits the topic of protecting the rights of Russian-speakers in Ukraine, ignoring the rights of Ukrainians and the Crimean Tatar population living in the peninsula;

- 2) the second tactic is a wide influence at regional authorities. Implementation of the official language of the city councils of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mariupol, Odesa, Sevastopol, and Kharkov.

Tactics of intimidation and dissemination of rumors make it possible to create precedents for the initiation of regional requirements and their promulgation. In Crimea, "horror stories" were spreading widely: the Tatars want to take away your land from you. The managers of the farms were profitable because they took possession of the land illegally using the authorities and shared it with their relatives.

Excessive attention to the Russian language causes conflicts within the country, which is deliberately divided by politicians into Russian and Ukrainian speaking. *Ukraina Moloda* published a note "Boycott Natasha who sings foreign songs". "It's enough to poison the Ukrainian soul with a double culture!", "On the Ternopil stage singers sing in Ukrainian or do not sing at all!" - leaflets were full of such categorical slogans, which were printed for "launch" among spectators before concerts. The first "lucky" to come across this surprise was Nataliya Mogilevskaya. And after the first song performed on the Ternopil concert in Russian, the chamber began to chant: "Down with Russian!" [Ukraina moloda 1999 №232 (1306): 1]. And six months later, on May 28, 2000, Ukrainian composer, People's Artist of Ukraine Igor Bilozir was murdered in Lviv after he prevented the singing of Russian folk songs by the audience.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Disruption of the internal situation in Ukraine regarding the status of the Russian language took place in parallel with the foreign policy of Russian Federation. For example, the deputy of the State Duma, Nikolay Lysenko, defiantly torn up a Ukrainian flag in front of the journalists. This photo was printed in many European countries, but no statements by Ukraine regarding this act were made public. As the photos of Oleg Vytovych and Yuriy Tyma, UNA-UNSO representatives, who in return torn up the Russian flag, were never published. On this occasion, Yuliya Mostova wrote: "It must be said that the pictures of the dismemberment of ripe rye and blue sky have gone around the world. It is noteworthy that the moment of the corresponding splitting of the Russian flag in the "corner" of the Ukrainian parliament was not fixed by any photojournalist or operator" [Dzerkalo tyzhnja 1995 №14(27): 1].
2. The weak position of the Ukrainian diplomatic corps, who were loyal to such acts of disrespect for the nation, gave Russian diplomats the confidence in impunity for the actions of its citizens. Ignorance and disrespect to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine were also demonstrated at the invitation of the Russian ambassador to hand over a note of protest demanding that the Russian



consular group stop working in Crimea. According to international standards, the ambassador had to arrive immediately but Leonid Smoliakov came only after the third invitation.

3. The absence of national symbolism of the country contributed to Russia's interference in Ukraine's internal affairs. Russia's ignoring of the national principles of Ukraine, first of all, manifested itself in the Crimea. And when during the parliamentary session, Oleksandr Moroz called on the leftist parties to vote for a blue-yellow flag or the country could be in a chaos, he was right. In Crimea, at that time, the state flag of Ukraine was not installed over the parliament building that symbolically demonstrated the absence of Ukrainian authorities on the peninsula. And even after the adoption of the Constitution, in 1997, when Yuriy Luzhkov visited Sevastopol, he publicly said that Sevastopol was a Russian city. "Our media circulate this event. Our government structures are thinking hard about what and how to respond until time passes and this reaction loses its meaning at all", the newspaper *Dzerkalo Tyzhnia* wrote [Dzerkalo tyzhnja 1997 №6(123): 4].
4. The transition from implicit methods of intervention to the explicit occurred when Ukrainian government began to independently conduct a democratic policy at home. As an example, there were two major conflicts with Russia, which demonstrated the publicity of its steps:
  - In 2002, at the 11th year of independence, the Ukrainian authorities began to solve the problems of the state border. Despite the constant opposition from Russia, the determination to create in the nearest future a full-fledged state border with its northern neighbor was firm. Although the Presidential Decree deals with the fight against international terrorism, the Cabinet of Ministers was instructed to provide funds for "demarcation of the state border of Ukraine with the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of Belarus, and the Russian Federation". The second paragraph read: "Within a month to make proposals for measures aimed at the earliest conclusion of a treaty between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on the state border, demarcation of this border and separation of the Azov Sea and the Kerch Strait" [Decree of the President of Ukraine no 532/2002]. This move has provoked a Tuzla conflict in the Kerch Strait. And many believed that Ukraine won in this conflict. Dmytro Vydrin, Head of the European Institute for Integration and Development, at the time, emphasized that the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation took place due to this conflict. "During this conflict, there were almost no people in Ukraine who would approve the actions of the Russian side ... Today, the Tuzla is consolidating Ukrainian consciousness, and this is perhaps more important than any political and territorial victories" [Correspondent 2003 №42(81): 18].
  - Russia's open intervention in Ukraine's political events took place on the eve of the presidential election in 2004. The central channels continuously broadcast videos of meetings between Viktor Yanukovich and Vladimir Putin. "On October 11, at the Congress of Ukrainians in Russia, Putin came along with Yanukovich and said that he would respect the choice of the Ukrainian people, although "this choice is not indifferent to him" [8, 25]. Billboards, depicting Viktor Yanukovich, were installed in Moscow in his support. Igor Mintusov, chairman of the board of directors of the "Niccolo M" Center for Political Counseling, said in an interview to Moscow Times that these billboards were not intended for voters: "Presidential administration just says

to people that it supports Yanukovych" [8, 25]. Five days before the election, Vladimir Putin arrived in Kyiv and his speech was broadcast by UT-1, 1+1, Inter TV channels. And on the eve of the second round, he came back to Ukraine and was the first who congratulated Viktor Yanukovych on his victory.

Therefore, when the third round was announced, people on Maidan wrote the "Letter to Putin from the people of Ukraine"; Putin was on a working visit to Turkey that day. On an orange canvas of 60 meters length "Yushchenko's supporters urged the Russian president not to interfere in Ukraine's internal affairs. Noting the commonality of the history of Russia and Ukraine, people persuaded Putin "to love Ukraine as a mother, not as a delicacy". After the main part, everyone could write on the cloth everything they wanted to say to Putin" [Correspondent 2004 №47(136): 7].

In general, 2004 Maidan showed that open interference into Ukraine's domestic policy with declaring respect for the right to self-determination of Ukrainians by Putin has severely damaged the ambitions of the Russian president. And his accusations that it was the West that brought Yushchenko to power, showed his own defeat.

**The results of scientific analysis:** the study substantiates that 1) during L. Kuchma's presidency Ukraine did not have a unified information strategy that was supposed to protect and promote the country's national interests; 2) L. Kuchma's hybrid regime, which put private interests above national, created precedents that provoked political instability inside the country; 3) the lack of strict vertical of power and control of the regional elite of the central government have led to active separatist claims from the South and East of the country; 4) Russia's constant interference into Ukraine's domestic policy and ignoring of the national principles of the country split Ukrainian society.

**Conclusions, innovations, recommendations:** The political stability of the country depends on the pragmatism of power, which is linked to the national values of society. If this pragmatism is based only on the private interests of oligarchs, who can influence the power, the political system turns into an imitation. This situation induces other states to actively intervene and seek control over internal policies in order to promote foreign interests. The activity of judicial, informational and institutional policies should take place in the context of a nation-wide development strategy. Only then, the protection of national interests from the part of information policy will create and reinforce the image of a free country.

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