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## **UKRAINIAN ISSUE IN US FOREIGN POLICY AT THE BEGINNING AND DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

The article reviews the main stages of formation of US foreign policy concept concerning Ukrainian issue at the beginning and during the Second World War. The author analyzes basic approaches and views of American political establishment about the problems of formation of Ukrainian independent state, the main factors which influenced elaboration of official position of Washington for Ukrainian question as one of the constituent parts of the Soviet direction of US foreign policy.

At the final stage of World War II with the deployment of bloc confrontation between the US and the USSR, the ruling elite of the United States raised the issue related to the adequate response to the output of the Ukrainian SSR in the international arena, the settlement process of practical cooperation with the Soviet Ukraine in the UN and coordination of such activities of Ukrainian émigré organizations, primarily in the United States. To address these problems, there were several major doctrinal approaches, which are analyzed and presented in this paper.

**Key words:** international relations, foreign policy, Ukrainian issue, the USA, Ukraine, USSR.

Since the beginning of January 1944 the fourth period of the Second World War, which culminated in the surrender of Nazi Germany, Ukrainian issue has resumed in US foreign policy, but in a new capacity. This was due to an unexpected in the West return to the Soviet Union republics some international functions and the need to develop a coordinated position of democratic anti-Hitler coalition members on this issue. In terms of deployment of the Cold War and bloc confrontation between the US and the USSR for the ruling elite of the United States raised the issue related to the adequate response to the output of the Ukrainian SSR in the international arena, development of new doctrinal approach to the Ukrainian issue, settlement process of practical cooperation with the Soviet Ukraine in UN and coordination of such activities with Ukrainian émigré organizations, primarily in the United States.

Ukrainian issues in international relations since World War II have been closely associated with the European vector of US foreign policy since at that time Ukraine could not play an independent role, being the subject of bargaining and expansion of the leading actors in international relations. Ukrainian SSR as quasi state formation was unable to have its own foreign policy and diplomacy.

In the US Congress Ukrainian issue since the beginning of the Second World War has been raised mainly to attract the votes of the electorate of Ukrainian origin, because at that time the United States had the population of about 800 000 of immigrants from Ukraine and their descendants. So, it is clear that the emergence of Ukrainian issue in discussions of American politics during World War II, is mainly associated with the activities of UIA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) and the situation among immigrants. Mostly it was a secret analytical material for internal employees of the State Department of the USA and other government agencies that examined the causes and origins of the Ukrainian national liberation movement, some facts and aspects of the history of Ukrainian statehood.

As a result, at the forefront of US foreign policy came a desire not to violate certain limits in dealing with the Soviet Union, because at the end of World War II, the US role in the Ukrainian issue was to implement a particular ideological impact on the Ukrainian people and decision-making process at various levels of government on recognition of the Ukrainians as "captive nations".

For a deeper understanding of the formation of the US position regarding the provision of USSR with foreign powers and the possibility of using it by the United States on the international stage, it is worth to clarify the place of Ukrainian issues in the activity of American authorities throughout the Second World War. Shortly before its explosion in Europe it was started the "internationalization" of US foreign policy and its return to the mainstream of globalization during T. Roosevelt's presidency. As it was stated by the Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, "After Hitler's attack in the West in May 1940 which caused the crisis, the president called for increased efforts in re-equipment and military production"<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Millis, W., Duffield, E. S. (1951). *The Forrestal Diaries*. New York: Viking Press, XXI.

The passivity of US foreign affairs agency of previous years was due to the fact that American diplomats in European countries interpreted international political events of 1920-1930's as "isolated", "self-resolved", not touching "the shores of America." "Since the United States have never defined a considerable interest in Eastern Europe, - concluded H. De Santis, Professor from the University of Chicago, - "US diplomats remained at a distance from its politicians during the interwar period. Thus, they were inclined to tolerate authoritarian governments and political influence of Germany and Italy as guarantors against further collapse and even "precursors of democratic conditions"<sup>1</sup>. Another important fact was the political support by Americans of the united Soviet Union as a factor of certain predictability of events in the region and possibly the main force of the future anti-Nazi coalition<sup>2</sup>.

In view of this, the US officially sympathized those immigrants that showed loyalty to the Soviet Union. Among the practical steps of the presidential administration it can be mentioned prohibition of "pro-Nazi organizations" in policy documents which contained a paragraph on the independence of Ukraine and, accordingly, the collapse of the USSR. But the move was made without publicity, and it has not received significant community response. Meanwhile in Washington they realized that "ethnic consciousness remained strong among many groups"<sup>3</sup>. As immigrant leaders through their links with "homeland" wanted to use the people of Ukrainian descent for "collecting funds and influence on American foreign policy"<sup>4</sup>.

However, the military alliance with the Soviet Union was also seen in the United States as a necessary and temporary one, that is why within the ruling elite of the state there were differences in relation to anti-Soviet minded immigrants. Not all American politicians agreed that Roosevelt "did not take the wishes and aspirations of smaller nations"<sup>5</sup>.

The United States could not ignore the Ukrainian issue at all, because at the beginning of the Second World War it was already beyond the scope of internal policy of the Soviet Union becoming an important regional issue. The main source of information about Ukraine for American politicians were analytical materials of diplomatic, military and intelligence sources. As noted Canadian historians L. Lutsyuk and B. Kordan, in Washington they drew from them opinions and concerns regarding the Ukrainian movement, which could play an influential and perhaps decisive role in determining the relevant government position on this issue"<sup>6</sup>.

At the same time Ukrainian nationalist circles could not rely on the active support of the United States not only because of the formation of allied relations of the White House with the Kremlin, but also because they were not perceived as a significant political force. When Western diplomats were in contact with the OUN (The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists), it was just about to take advantage of opportunities in the confrontation with Nazi Germany, and then - with the Soviet Union. This position of the United States in this matter based on the fear that the promotion of collapse of the USSR could damage US national interests. Like at the era of the Ukrainian Revolution 1917-1920 pp. US restrained reaction was determined by the lack of unity in the Ukrainian movement.

Moreover, as in the First World War and the Paris Peace Conference in 1919-1920s., the problem of self-determination of Ukraine was seen through the "German perspective". As an example, you can specify a record of US Ambassador in Poland E. Dzh. Drexel Biddle 'Views on Possible German Plans for a "Greater Ukraine," which was directed on December 15, 1938 to Roosevelt and K. Hall<sup>7</sup>. American diplomat, in particular, reported that "playing a card of Great Ukraine is a tactical maneuver inspired by Berlin". Drexel Biddle also said that the "right to self-determination" was not only necessary to Berlin to

<sup>1</sup> De Santis, Hugh. (1980). *The Diplomacy of Silence: The American Foreign Service, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War, 1933-1947*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 56-57.

<sup>2</sup> Lukas, Richard C. (1978). *The Strange Allies, The United States and Poland, 1941-1945*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 87.

<sup>3</sup> Gerson, Louis L. (1964). *The Hyphenate in Recent American Politics and Diplomacy*. Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Levering, Ralph B. (1976). *American Opinion and the Russian Alliance, 1939-1945*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 26.

<sup>5</sup> Laloy, J. (1990). Yalta: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. *Harpercollins*, 11-12.

<sup>6</sup> Luciuk, Lubomyr Y., Kordan, Bohdan S. (1987). *Anglo-American Perspectives on the Ukrainian Question, 1938-1951. A Documentary Collection (Studies in East European Nationalisms)*. Kingston, Ont.; Vestal, N.Y.: Limestone Press, VIII.

<sup>7</sup> Luciuk, Lubomyr Y., Kordan, Bohdan S. (1987). *Anglo-American Perspectives on the Ukrainian Question, 1938-1951. A Documentary Collection (Studies in East European Nationalisms)*. Kingston, Ont.; Vestal, N.Y.: Limestone Press, VIII, 24-31.

cover a military campaign in the East, but also in order to cause instability in "countries-objects" and in Western democracies<sup>1</sup>.

Summarizing this paper, we note US diplomat's abstraction of the American diplomat from actual problems of the Ukrainian movement, his desire to submit them in the light of the potential interests of the US and its allies, the lack of a comprehensive analysis of the situation not only in the USSR but also in the Western Ukraine, which then belonged to Poland, noticeable exaggeration of the scale of nationalist resistance in Ukraine and far from the validity, the transfer of situation among Polish Ukrainians to the wider population of the USSR.

Further discussion of the Ukrainian issue in US government circles during the Second World War was primarily associated with the activities of OUN-UPA and political situation in émigré environment. Mostly it was secret analytical materials, which dealt with the causes and origins of the Ukrainian national liberation movement, as well as some aspects of the history of Ukraine and others.

In his report to the Department of National military services the analyst of the University of Atlanta T. Phillips, in particular, noted that neither the US nor Canada in the spring of 1941 had a strategic program for immigrant groups while "Hitler promises and shows them something quite prominent. And whatever it is offered to Ukrainian by Germans, it will be better than what they are suffering from now"<sup>2</sup>. But in general, documents which describe the attitude of Washington to Ukrainian organizations in the US, and through them indirectly to the prospects of Ukraine's independence, are very prominent in the number of governmental, diplomatic and intelligence materials during World War II.

There is an indicative memorandum of conversation of Assistant Head of European Affairs in the State Department L. Henderson with the head of the Rebirth of Ukraine Organisation, a former member of MSA, Professor at the University of Minnesota O. Hranovskyi on July 3, 1941. It is noted that in response to allegations of O. Hranovskyi that "independent Ukraine will restore the lost balance of power in Europe and reinforce the continent with a strong democracy," the US official said, "Today the United States is unable to determine the position as for Ukraine's independence"<sup>3</sup>.

So it was an obvious desire of the US State Department not to publish its own position on the Ukrainian question, because on the one hand, it was about the people, that was a part of the state - military US ally, and on the other - conceptually and ideologically USSR was a hostile state to the White House. State Department employee Steinhardt in particular, noted that "in every case when the State Department or embassy made concessions to the Soviet government or approached it in a spirit of friendly cooperation, these gestures were met by the Soviets with a strong suspicion"<sup>4</sup>.

Such situation forced by the military "double taxation" effected on the most of official documents of the US on Ukrainian issue. It is interesting to mention the above stated L. Henderson's memorandum to the State Department on July 24, 1941, "The Ukrainians - he wrote, - are generally a peasant nation. Those intellectuals who rose in Europe during the last century, were subjected to gradual absorption ... by classes of Russia, Poland or Austria. That is why they had no prominent leaders in Europe ... Naturally, patriotic Poles and Russians fall into anger in any conversation about the independence of Ukraine and immediately accuse any person of Ukrainian origin, who stands for an independent Ukraine, in Nazism...

Perhaps among extremist Ukrainian nationals there are a few terrorists. Of course, Poles and Russians exaggerate their number and cruelty ... Ukraine and the Ukrainians can some day, despite the current inability to express themselves, to become a real force. It would be a disaster for us if we pushed this power in Nazi camp because of misunderstanding or misinterpretation. In the United States there is a little less than a million people of Ukrainian descent"<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, it was about the fact that US national interests are not interfering openly in the course of national liberation processes in a given region, to ensure there a positive image of American politics. In a letter of Deputy Secretary of State S. Wells to US diplomats in Latin American countries from August 23,

<sup>1</sup> Luciuk, Lubomyr Y., Kordan, Bohdan S. (1987). *Anglo-American Perspectives on the Ukrainian Question, 1938-1951. A Documentary Collection (Studies in East European Nationalisms)*. Kingston, Ont.; Vestal, N.Y.: Limestone Press, VIII, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Камінський, Є.Є. (2012). *Україна. США. Світ. Вибране*. Київ: Центр вільної преси, 190-191.

<sup>3</sup> Камінський, Є.Є. (2012). *Україна. США. Світ. Вибране*. Київ: Центр вільної преси, 191.

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers. 1941 (In Seven Volumes). (1958). *Volume I: General, The Soviet Union*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 765.

<sup>5</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers. 1941 (In Seven Volumes). (1958). *Volume I: General, The Soviet Union*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 96-97.

1941 it is noted, "It is assumed that while the Ukrainian nationalists are apparently involved into pro-Nazi activities, they are not necessarily sympathetic to Germany today and could be directed to the direction lucrative for the United States, if we imagine a positive policy towards them. For this, I emphasize, you should follow the marginal sensitivity and caution in your actions in this relationship. You are required to submit comments on the possible return of Ukrainian nationalist feelings in a better channel for the United States "<sup>1</sup>.

With the entry of the United States in World War II, on December 7, 1941, being in relations allied with the Kremlin, Washington was not so much concerned with the fact of Ukrainian Nationalists cooperation with the Third Reich as with the fact that such a significant anti-Soviet force in the future could be outside US influence. The obvious is the fact that some American politicians realized the need to strengthen American influence in Soviet Ukraine, but there is no reason to talk about Ukrainian consistent US strategy as it is. Further developments confirmed the intention of the US leadership to stay outside the nationalist movement in Ukraine, while making methods of diplomacy and intelligence activities that would leave the possibility of contact with it.

Thus, the official US position as for the Ukrainian issue during World War II was determined by the following factors: forced convergence and further cooperation with the Soviet Union; internal civilization split of the population in Ukraine into "west" and "east"; that Ukrainian nationalists found again support from Germany; opposition of the USA allies as for possible changes of state borders in Europe; the main task of the US was to defeat Hitler's Nazism.

Therefore, in the international situation, the United States limited with general statements, attempts to predict developments in Ukraine and around in the postwar years, the assessment of potential of UPA, the study of the nature of the Ukrainian émigré organizations in the context of US national interests. The approaches of official Washington could change only in the case of public self-expression of Ukraine as a result of the liberation struggle of the people or with the support of the majority of Ukrainian citizens.

"The examples that history gives on the creation of new states, are so paradoxical and even contradictory," - wrote the State Department expert H. McDonald. – "First of all, to become the new state, it is important to be in a certain sense, or at least to look "a historic" state. This is not the same as to have a "populist" national identity "<sup>2</sup>.

Totalitarian nature of the basic tenets of the OUN also played its role, as in the tradition of American political thought there was a rejection of any signs of anti-democratic regime. However, with the change of the situation on the fronts of World War II in favor of the anti-Hitler coalition some political forces in the United States began to lean in the future to the necessity of refuse from the strategy of isolationism for active participation of the state in addressing problems of the various regions of the world in order to maintain and expand democracy. Thus, the leadership of the Ukrainian liberation movement had the problem of compulsory declaration of democratic principles, because only those forces in Ukraine, which declared the idea of democracy on the American model, could hope for the US aid. Such changes in US policy as for nationalist movements in general, and Ukrainian in particular, began from the first post-war months in the context of the doctrine of "clear purpose". At the same time the American leadership has always stressed the need of "non-violation of treaties and agreements".

Summarizing the US approaches to the Ukrainian issue during the Second World War, it should be taken into consideration a high level of popularity of ideas of federalism among Americans. Therefore it is not to be expected from official Washington an undisputed approval of Soviet collapse even in the long term, especially with the view of the expected negative consequences of this event for US national interests. As rightly it was pointed out at the height of the Cold War by B.Kordan and L.Lutsyuk, "the logic of the modern state system puts established boundaries and known links above uncertainty arising from changes"<sup>3</sup>.

British security coordinator in New York A. Halpern in a note to Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada on August 16 1944 said, "In the States, I think pro-German Ukrainian organizations (Ukrainian

<sup>1</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers. 1941 (In Seven Volumes). (1958). *Volume I: General, The Soviet Union*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 99.

<sup>2</sup> Luciuk, Lubomyr Y., Kordan, Bohdan S. (1987). *Anglo-American Perspectives on the Ukrainian Question, 1938-1951. A Documentary Collection (Studies in East European Nationalisms)*. Kingston, Ont.; Vestal, N.Y.: Limestone Press, VIII.

<sup>3</sup> Luciuk, Lubomyr Y., Kordan, Bohdan S. (1987). *Anglo-American Perspectives on the Ukrainian Question, 1938-1951. A Documentary Collection (Studies in East European Nationalisms)*. Kingston, Ont.; Vestal, N.Y.: Limestone Press, VIII, 1.



and all national organizations in the US) are or were under the indirect influence of Berlin, but they suffered a terrible defeat. More and more people came to the conclusion that a strong and unified Ukraine has only one chance to survive as an independent cultural and national integrity. Alliance with Russia gives such a chance"<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, any new national state (nation) could count on US support only if its policies or international political situation prevailing around it correspond in some way to the US national interest.

There is an indicative State secretary K. Hall's application in April 1944, "All the peoples of Europe must support the belief that a stable American foreign policy is aimed at developing strong and progressive national government, which, like ours, is dedicated to improving the social welfare of nation as a whole"<sup>2</sup>. It is to the "support of faith" without applying much practical efforts and actions by propaganda it was mainly directed the official US policy as for the Ukrainian issue in the Cold War. In the American establishment the desire not to cross a certain threshold in relations with the Soviet Union has finally taken its place. Therefore, in the postwar years, the US role in the Ukrainian issue was mainly restricted to ideological influence on the population of the USSR and decision-making at various levels of government under which Ukraine recognized as enslaved.

Temporary increase of attention of the official Washington to Ukrainian issue during the closing stages of World War II in Europe was stipulated by constitutional amendments on February 1, 1944 in the Soviet Union and by the creation on March 4 of that year the Commissariat on Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR. Indeed, in the wake of impressive victories at the front, in a new international political situation caused by them, the Kremlin decided to use the "Ukrainian issue" for decision of a number of strategic problems.

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<sup>2</sup> *Philadelphia Inquirer*. 1944, April 10.