

## GUAM: UKRAINE'S STRATEGIC PROJECT

### Abstract

The article deals with the Ukraine's foreign policy strategy in terms of cooperation with the GUAM member countries (with Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova). The author gives brief historic flashback to 1997, when GUAM had been founded, and explains the reasons why Ukraine pledged for cooperation with neighboring countries, which pursue the European and Euro-Atlantic integration as major foreign policy direction. The article also suggests main common grounds of the GUAM countries such as oil and gas transportation to Europe, „frozen” conflicts, and opposition to strong Russian influence.

**Key-words:** GUAM, conflicts, oil and gas transportation, human rights, economic cooperation

Ukrainian government is deeply interested in cooperation with countries – strategic partners in the development of multilateral economic cooperation with regional and sub-regional bodies, especially with those that do not contradict the strategic goal – European integration. There are Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova among these partners, which organized GUAM. This organization unites states with similar political and economic external orientations. The geographical position of these countries strengthens Association. Foreign policy priority of GUAM states is deepening cooperation with Western countries, security of energy pathways that control the GUAM countries, support each other in all dimensions, and attempt to avoid pressure from Russia. Member associations gradually strengthen economic and political relations of special partnership and broad cooperation at regional level and in solving international problems [1]. Although in the early stages of its development GUAM turned out to be in a situation of active conflict between of leading geopolitical actors [2]. Ukraine pays much attention to the activities of GUAM, since it has its own area of interest, related primarily to transmission and development of trans corridor; maintaining security, expansion of markets for its products and the diversification of delivery of goods of critical import. Ukraine, as a leading and active member of the organization, has a leader status of a region and is a head of GUAM: in Ukraine capital Kiev was opened the headquarters of the organization. On establishment of GUAM was first discussed at the international conference held under the leadership of the EU with the participation of the former Soviet republics (1993, Brussels). Participants agreed to enforce EU program aimed at developing transport corridor from Western Europe via the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea to Central Asia. This program was part of a larger project of revival of the Silk Road, enabled effective use of favorable transport options geographical location of States. Trilateral Azerbaijani-Georgian-Ukrainian agreement on the creation of trans-corridor was signed in 1996 [3].

In the October 10, 1997 (Strasbourg, France) the presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine signed an agreement on establishment of GUAM. In a joint communiqué emphasized the need for the development of quadrilateral cooperation to strengthen stability and security in Europe based on the principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of state borders, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights [4]. Countries association for joint tasks includes participation in peace

processes on the territory of member conflicts, including solving the problem of armed separatism; active relationship with NA TO, including the program „Partnership for Peace”; creation of a joint battalion of the armed forces of GUAM.

Thus, GUAM acquired features international organization which plays an integral role in the development of the Caspian-Black Sea region. September 16, 1998 the heads of border services have reached an agreement on cooperation in border protection (including fighting terrorism and drug trafficking), and in 1999 in Georgia held joint military exercises as a legend „protection” of oil pipeline Baku – Supsa. April 24, 1999 during the anniversary of the Washington NATO summit Uzbekistan declared about membership in GUAM as a partner of all members of this organization. These events preceded the conclusion of the February 19, 1998 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Ukraine and Uzbekistan, as well as the output of Uzbekistan of the post soviet Russian military bloc – Collective Security Treaty (Tashkent Treaty).

Following the meeting, Ukraine and Uzbekistan adopted Washington Declaration. In a statement (p. 3-6) defined security challenges, the need to develop a transport corridor (p.7), regular consultations (p.8) etc. Brake factor of the new organization was that for a long time leaders of the member states of GUAM could determine the priority tasks of the association. Some advocated the primacy of economic cooperation (position of Uzbekistan and Moldova); others insisted on joint projects, including the implementation of Oil Transportation Corridor (position Ukraine); others advocated the need to create regional security systems (position of Georgia).

The lack of unity among the partners was not positive factor to strengthen the association. Despite the declared accession of Uzbekistan took a wait, explaining his doubts weak activity of the organization or reluctance to participate in the tasks of GUAM.

The decisions of Istanbul Summit (1999) enhanced GUAM moves contributed to the OSCE because member countries signed the international agreement registered de facto decision on the withdrawal of Russian troops from the all territories of GUAM. This fact could be seen as an encouraging step towards relieving the territorial conflicts. In addition, the summit decided on the implementation of trans-Caspian pipeline and transportation of oil via the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline. In the autumn of 2000 during the UN Millennium Summit (NY) Ukraine initiated the institutionalization of GUAM – turning it into a regional international organization with clearly defined objectives and functions. This decision was confirmed by the Memorandum and the Protocol on the development of free trade in the region, which also concerned the provision of free promotion capital goods and people, joint participation in projects and TRACECA transport corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia. An absolute priority activity of GUAM recognized the effective functioning of the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia and develops its infrastructure.

The main purpose of GUAM at this stage was to strengthen sub-regional and regional stability countries, but not in the performance of military alliance obligations or enforcing the principle of collective security and defense. It is somehow neutralized opposition to GUAM activities of some regional states, including Russia.

Implementation of the southern route to transport Caspian oil bypassing Ukrainian territory has caused confusion among partners. Recall that the signing of the construction of the Baku-Ceyhan reduced not

high enough chances to Ukraine in implementing its own project Odessa-Brody pipeline. Recall that Ukraine has started construction of the pipeline and oil terminal not signed international framework agreements with the countries - owners of oil. The position of the Russian side, which launched a massive fight for neutralization geo-economics' plans GUAM, was activating complicated the problem of project Odessa-Brody. With the assistance of specialized UN agencies – UNIDO, Russia and Iran started the development project of transport corridor North-South (Helsinki-Moscow-Tehran-Riyadh Riad) under the acronym NOSTRAK which can be seen as a complement to the European project TRACECA. So, GUAM prospects were dependent on the ability of Russia to implement its alternative pipeline project “Blue Stream”, “Yamal-Europe”, “Northern route” and CTC-Tenhyzke oil field (Kazakhstan-Novorossiysk port).

The practice of cooperation of GUAM proved the effectiveness of multilateral consultations mechanism underlying the organizational structure of the association. Milestones in the development of new regional association was the June Summit 2001 (Yalta, Crimea), which defined the ultimate goal – transformation GUAM in an international organization [5]. There were some documents as results of the summit in Yalta: Charter, GUAM Convention on mutual assistance on consular issues; discussed the possibility Agreement FTA, under which – issues related to the development, operation and security infrastructure, transport communications passing through the territory of GUAM (in t. h. TRACECA). It was agreed to the introduction of chairmanship in GUAM [6].

Prospects of GUAM were interested other countries - Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, which could take part in its work as observers. In the summer of 2001 the presidents of Ukraine and Slovakia discussed the prospects of development of energy transportation grids, among the most attractive option was the project of revival of the Silk Road through Slovakia from Asia to Europe, freight and commodity flows direct from Europe to Asia and China.

US provides to GUAM particular weight seeing more organizations link stability and security in the region, system of energy supply in Europe and a counterbalance to Russian pressure. US Congress partially funded organization, in connection with the decade of the CIS provided participants of the “anti-terrorism” 50 mln. USD. After the tragic events in the US security and protection of pipelines from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea ports of Georgia has become even more relevant. GUAM could act as an outpost in the fight against terrorism as the Silk Road and TRACECA transport corridor. In this organization could have been put responsibility for security in the region on the border of East and West, especially the safety of pipelines that concerns the interests of the entire international community [7].

June 13, 2002 the Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan “given the lack of rationality of his further stay” in GUAM (as said in a statement the Uzbek MFA), announced its withdrawal from the countries' unification. Denunciation agreement on membership in GUAM Tashkent said the lack of progress in the organization [8]. Tashkent's position is understandable, since in the Eurasian region have been significant geopolitical changes. US gradually rolled up its presence in Central Asia, Uzbekistan diminishing areas of cooperation with NATO, Russia increased pressure on the region. In the demarche Uzbek side responded instantly Moscow: Tashkent invited to return to the Russian net, primarily the Collective Security Treaty Organization. President of Uzbekistan ranged on appropriate action and only in March 2006 signed a decree of exit his country from the organization. Partners of Uzbekistan in GUAM balanced attitude to

the decision of the Uzbek side, in their opinion, to leave or take membership in international organizations is the sovereign right of each state, while not ruled out that Uzbekistan is also interested in providing transportation corridors from Asia to Europe.

An important milestone in the combined efforts of GUAM was Yalta summit (19 - 20 July 2002), the preparation of which took active participation Ukrainian side. Recall that on the eve of meetings there were meeting ambassadors of GUAM in Kiev, a meeting of foreign ministers of GUAM in Baku, meeting of the Committee of National Coordinators (CNC) of GUAM, which were agreed Declaration on common efforts to ensure stability and security in the region, Regulations on the Board Foreign Ministers decision on observer status GUAM activities and the final Communiqué of the Summit. Nevertheless dealt with such documents as the agreement on free trade zone, the Temporary Provisions of GUAM Information Office, the Agreement on cooperation in combating terrorism, organized crime and other dangerous crimes, Protocol on cooperation in culture for 2002–2005 and the agreement on the establishment of the Business Council of GUAM. Thus, the direction of economic cooperation within the organization had to activate the agreement on free trade. Commenting on the signing of the FTA, the President of Ukraine stressed that the FTA requires and Ukraine and all other countries. Another way to develop GUAM does not exist [10]. The US side supported GUAM projects, including the arrangement of borders and customs. However, the United States, as in the case of the Baku-Ceyhan stressed its interest in the existence of several pipelines in the region. Specific forms of cooperation with GUAM countries were offered within the OSCE, BSEC and bilaterally with the Islamic Republic of Iran, etc. [11]. Dissonance was the position of officials who do all kinds of pressure on GUAM partners, saying that without Russia association fail to realize energy projects. This position of the Russian side explained Moscow fears advance of NATO / US deep into the Caspian-Black Sea region and Russia itself [12].

In contrast to Russian pressure to consolidate the efforts of the GUAM countries set the stage realization of national interests in the region contributed to the deepening of equal relations with other CIS countries, who see in GUAM alternative project of international cooperation. UN Secretary K. Annan praised the organization, confirmed the readiness of the UN to further enhance cooperation with GUAM in the spirit of partnership. In December 2003 the United Nations gave GUAM observer status in the General Assembly [13].

Thus, at a high international level recognized GUAM as an international regional organization that can not only solve the problems of the region, but also make a significant contribution to combating global challenges. December 3, 2015 at the meeting of Foreign Ministers of GUAM and Japan signed a program of cooperation of GUAM-Japan for economic development and involves the development of specific sartorial projects. The priority areas of cooperation identified parties to strengthen energy security and promote renewable energy, promotion of joint tourism product of GUAM member countries, prevention and elimination of consequences of natural and man-made disasters, including waste management, development of medicine [14].

Business Forum (March 27, 2017 in Kiev) of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (ODED-GUAM) with the participation of Heads of Governments of the Member States, particular attention was paid to creating the necessary tools for proper functioning FTA GUAM and

practical action to implement the concept corridor of GUAM as an important link between Europe and Asia, which has become a competitive international routes [15].

Note that the activation of cooperation of GUAM countries can contribute to solving problems related to fuel and energy complex and transport related industries and countries - participants (the route Baku - Supsa - Odessa - Brody - Adamova Zastava - Gdansk - Plock). Significant reserves of deepening economic cooperation and development of integration processes are rooted in specific sectors of industrial production, formation of transport communications, implementation of scientific and technical potential, the development of recreational resources, increased international tourism and so on. There are opportunities to implement projects in GUAM institutional capabilities of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, as the Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Moldova are members of BSEC. However, today's realities demonstrate that of cooperation within GUAM Ukraine has no economic impact. Member associations – mostly weak economic partners. According to the Interstate Economic Committee of the CIS in 2000 the GDP of Azerbaijan and Moldova was at mid-1960., Georgia – late 1960s, Uzbekistan – the late 1980s. The economy of these countries, except Uzbekistan, it depends on outside help. No country does not have influence in the international financial architecture and is unable to act lobbyist in the promotion of projects. In addition, Ukraine can expect a corresponding investment from GUAM countries. The trade turnover between them was about 2% of their foreign trade, while Russia was the main trading partner of the participating countries. By the said adding that economic relations with Ukraine GUAM rolled faster than with other CIS countries, in accordance with the CIS – 23%, with GUAM countries – 26%. Thus, the volume of trade between Ukraine and Azerbaijan in 1996 amounted to 119.1 mln. USD and in 2000 – 64,6 mln. Later, there was an increase in terms of turnover: in 2013 foreign trade turnover of goods and services with AR was 827.13 mln. USD and increased compared with the corresponding period in 2012 to 110.83 mln. or 15.5% [16]. But the war in eastern Ukraine led to a new reduction of trade operations with almost all countries an average of 30%. For example: Ukrainian trade with Georgia in 1996 was 187.0 mln. USD, in 2000 – 48.1 mln., and in 2012 the volume of bilateral trade amounted to 718 mln. USD. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, in January-September 2014 the volume of trade between Ukraine and Moldova amounted to 668.97 mln. USD decreased compared to the same period in 2013 to 68.7 mln. USD or 9.3%. Uzbekistan – 239.5 mln. USD in 1996, 294.0 mln. USD – in 2000. In 2012 the foreign trade turnover of goods and services fell sharply and amounted to 240,790 mln.USD, decreased compared to the previous 2011 year by 34.3%. As of 01.07.2012 p. Uzbekistan has invested in the economy of Ukraine 23 831.0 thousand USD.

Ukraine invested in the economy of Uzbekistan 250.1 thousand [16]. GUAM States are debtors of the Russian Federation, on August 1, 2000 the official national debt of Ukraine to Russia amounted to 1.974 billion. USD, or 18.8% of total external debt of Ukraine. Stored Georgian debt to Russia for energy – 46.4 mln. and natural gas – 83 mln. USD. Therefore, likely application for establishment of a free trade today should be seen more as a hypothetical phenomenon rather than an objective. There remain significant obstacles to interaction of the GUAM member states that are not only economic failure partners, but also geostrategic perspective.

In GUAM there are negative tendencies that hinder its economic development. Almost every country is faced with internal conflict situations (Northern Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh crises,

Transnistria, Crimea and East Ukraine etc.). GUAM includes countries that have problems with Russia in the military sphere: in Moldova are the remains of 14 Russian army, in Abkhazia formed a strong military grouping of Russia, Azerbaijan did not extend the agreement on military base of its territory but alarmed by increased Russian military presence in Armenia and others. The region is surrounded by new and old nuclear powers. In this space there is a peculiar formation of a security vacuum to overcome that requires joint efforts of the region with the support of all interested states and international security structures. Member associations leading role in enhancing GUAM impose on Ukraine. Unfortunately, Russia's military action against Ukraine deprived our country of stability. Ukraine needs to improve its political and economic situation, to promote the integration of GUAM into the international community, to raise their own regional influence to expand promising markets by creating multi-system cooperation with the Black Sea-Caspian region. Participation in GUAM Ukraine got a chance to take advantage of the real geopolitical situation. Prospects are seen in intensifying efforts to resolve conflict area; plus since 2001, regular political consultations in the format „GUAM – Rio Group”. An interesting option to attract GUAM to global political and economic processes have an agreement Ukraine and Brazil to promote the development of contacts between regional organizations [17]. Good prospects opening up in cooperation with the security of the Visegrad Group and others. Conducted joint meeting of Defense Ministers of GUAM (Baku, 1999), Georgia and Ukraine cooperate in the military field; armed forces of participating in joint training program „Partnership for Peace and Security”. Another specific area of security cooperation is the fight against international terrorism and the proliferation of drugs. Another important aspect is security cooperation with emergencies, due primarily to the protection of oil corridors, which are high risk factor and a primary objects of terrorist attacks [17].

An important form of cooperation is cooperation and mutual Consular Affairs under the Convention of GUAM on mutual assistance Consular Affairs (June 2001). Developing cooperation in the humanitarian field (created Women Forum of GUAM, signed an agreement on cooperation in education, protocol on cooperation between the Academies of Sciences of GUAM member countries in science and technology, created by the Council of Tourism, etc.) [18]. As for the prospects of unification, there are different forecasts from optimistic that GUAM will become the powerful independent organization and it will join the new members, such as Brazil, Bulgaria, Greece, Kazakhstan, Poland, Romania, Slovakia. To the most pessimistic, that its complete collapse [19].

On the one hand, since 2001 the integration processes within the organization become more active, the process of institutionalization, signed several important agreements, increasing weight in the international arena, GUAM regarded as an independent subject of international relations, talking about strengthening the position. On the other hand, there are not developed a pragmatic projects that would be interested in all participants; not consolidated interests; discovered no common structure and no defined place in the new geopolitical space of Europe, the Black Sea and Caspian regions. So today we talk about the development of the distant future almost impossible. The number of negative factors affecting the fate of the organization, dominated, and their evaluation status is often higher than that of positive factors.

We emphasize that Ukraine in the implementation of foreign policy is extremely interested in the activities of GUAM development cooperation with members in various fields. It is necessary to take into

account the fact that the GUAM countries have found a deep commitment to the idea of creating a reliable security zone between Europe, the Caucasus and Asia, which will run territories members. However, given the strong influence of the Black Sea-Caspian region external factors and the impossibility of participating countries through its own weakness to resist them, obviously, the future of GUAM will depend on the position of the US, EU, Russia, Turkey and Iran. But the main burden in strengthening GUAM has to go to Ukraine as the most powerful state in the union.

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