

ARTICLES

MILITARY REFORM: PROGRESS AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF STAGNATION



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After ten years of various initiatives to build, develop and reform the Armed Forces, Ukraine is still far from achieving its main targets in the Defence Reform sphere, and particularly in ensuring high combat readiness for the Armed Forces, as well as their progressive development. Concentrated efforts produced some positive results, but it is difficult to see many systemic improvements yet. The Armed Forces do not yet seem capable of effective protection of the sovereignty of the country in the face of a serious military threat¹. Furthermore, there does not yet seem to be a clear, well-grounded vision of the future shape of the Armed Forces nor, crucially, sufficient political will to expedite military reform. Solutions to urgent issues are being postponed for much later consideration.

Progress

Definitive success has only been reached in a few, rather limited but typical peacetime military activities, as indicated below².

❖ **Assistance to local authorities** in mine clearing and disaster relief: mine clearing groups were formed in the Armed Forces, which have neutralised more than 370 thousand mines over a ten year period; units have also taken an active part in engineering and rescue work during natural disasters. For example, during the spring flood in 2001, they evacuated 555 people, transported about 120 tons of supplies, and delivered more than 25 tons of food and 1.2 tons of medicine³.

❖ **Peacekeeping activity:** Ukraine is recognised all over the world as an active participant in the peacekeeping

process; more than 20,000 Ukrainian servicemen have served in peacekeeping missions since 1992; more than \$100 million reimbursement has been received from the UN; at present, about 1,700 Ukrainians are participating in ten peacekeeping missions around the world.

❖ **International military co-operation:** the Armed Forces of Ukraine maintain military co-operation with 76 different countries; about 270 documents on co-operation have been signed; considerable assistance packages have been received from partners (the biggest one from the US, amounting to \$630 million overall), very fruitful co-operation with NATO and NATO nations, within the framework of “Partnership for Peace” is developing both promisingly and qualitatively — for example, about 600 joint activities have been planned for 2002⁴.

¹ More than half (58.7%) of citizens polled by Sociological Service of Razumkov Centre in January, 2002 also thought that the Armed Forces and other military formations are not capable of effective defence of the state sovereignty against military threats; less than a quarter (23.8%) of the polled believed the opposite. Experts surveyed by the Centre are even more sceptical: 63% — believe that Military organisation is not capable of effective defence of the sovereignty of Ukraine against military threats. Hereafter in the article the results of polling 100 experts during Razumkov Centre Round-table “Democratic Civilian Control over the Military in Ukraine: the Path from Form to Substance” held on October 24, 2000 are used.

² According to the information published by the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine.

³ Press-release of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine of October 30, 2001. — <http://www.mil.gov.ua>.

⁴ Chief amongst the current priorities for the NATO-Ukraine relations is the National Defence Reform Objectives, jointly staffed by Ukraine and NATO, and approved by the Minister of Defence of Ukraine together with 19 NATO nations. Its aim is to strike a finite balance between the defence plans and defence resources in the best interests of the State.



❖ **Military education:** a military officer training system for military specialists has gained formal accreditation under the national education system. Every Ukrainian officer now studies a foreign language to a recognised State level. Ukraine provides military training for personnel from other countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Baltics, China, Hungary, etc.

❖ **Development of a legal base for the Armed Forces:** there has been a definite improvement in the quality of new laws and other legal acts governing the military. For example, we have seen marked improvements in the transparency of the defence budget, progressing from a mere four budget categories in 1997 to 30 categories in 2002. Moreover, the budget for 2002 was drawn up on a task or deliverables-orientated basis (goal-oriented planning).

❖ **Arms trade:** since 1996, Ukraine’s success has placed the country amongst the top ten arms exporters in the world; for the first time in 2001, new products manufactured by Ukrainian enterprises (rather than sold from existing stock) averaged half of Ukraine’s total exports; earnings from the sale of surplus armaments ran up to 20-30% of the military budget; in 2001, sales of the Armed Forces’ surplus armaments outperformed the plan at 114%.

There are also positive changes in other spheres, like military medicine, military air transport etc. At the same time, the above-mentioned spheres mostly involve equipment issues. The emphasis here has been on finding solutions to current or short-to-medium term problems which are often aimed at gaining instant profit. Success in these spheres has not had a significant impact on the state of the Military, including the Armed Forces.

Level of professionalism in the Armed Forces

Information on the combat readiness of the Armed Forces (the key factor of which is the level of combat, staff and command training in Ukraine is still considered to be classified and thus is not published routinely. However, sometimes even the minimal amount of information still enables an experienced observer to get a feel for the performance of the Army in relation to its main task: — “protection of the state against armed aggression or armed conflict” (as defined in legislation).

There has been definite success in the training of troops — for example, information provided in 2001 indicated that “more firing exercises were conducted from combat vehicles, that they were driven more and that there were more parachute descents”⁵. That said, last year, “an army helicopter pilot in Ukraine has an average 10 hours in the air per year,” whilst for an Air Force Fixed Wing pilot “the number of flight hours per pilot has considerably increased and now averages more than 20 hours per annum”⁶. This of course is ten times less (!) than the NATO standard.

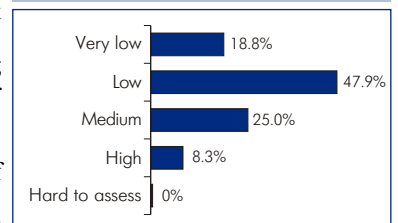
According to the estimates of the Commander-in-Chief, Air Force, General A.Strelnikov, “in 2001, despite a reduction in planned tasks for combat training, only 15% were fulfilled. On the assumption that material support remains at the same level in 2002, the Ukrainian Air Force could loose its remaining combat potential. At present, we simply cannot speak about improvements in training, whilst we are unable to renew our pilots’ skills, including those of our formerly well prepared top-level specialists”⁷.

Within the context of professionalism, the conversation for many years has been focused, first of all, on the individual training programmes for servicemen, or on training in small units and then, normally only when training does not require much material expenditure. There is little available information about regiment and brigade level exercises. That is why there must be some doubt about claims that, in 2001, the Land Forces “managed to reach a qualitatively new level of combat and operational training,” as the “results of command post exercises, training and games”⁸ are said to confirm. How can one improve quality without training officers’ and soldiers’ under conditions, which genuinely resemble combat conditions, in other words, full-scale, live manoeuvres?

So, the conclusion can be drawn that, in spite of success in some relatively narrow spheres, activity levels in respect of the multifunctional employment of the Armed Forces does not go much beyond command post exercises and lecture hall presentations. So, in reality, the Army can fight within integrated divisions and corps “on paper” only — **the Armed Forces’ professional training level is still insufficient for carrying out their missions.**

Moreover, two thirds of the experts, polled by Razumkov Centre, consider that the Armed Forces’ professional training level is “low” or “very low” — 47.9% and 18.8% respectively. A quarter of experts polled consider the level as “medium” (25%) whilst only 8.3% judge it to be “high” (Diagram “Assessment of the level of professional training of the Armed Forces of Ukraine”).

Assessment of the level of professional training of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, % of experts polled



Fatal accidents recently among the civilian population, stemming from accidental hits on civilian targets during military exercises (e.g. Brovary in 2000 and the Tu-154 in 2001), together with the rather harsh assessment of the State’s leadership⁹ also point to a low level of professional training. However, it is important to note here that the key to the problem is not only in the hands

⁵ Shvyriov V. Land Forces in the Future Will Remain the Most Powerful... Interview with the Commander-in-Chief, Army, Colonel-General P.Shuliak. — *Narodna Armiya*, December 12, 2001, p.4.

⁶ Voroniuk V. Ukrainian Army of the XXI Century. — *Narodna Armiya*, February 6, 2002, p.2.

⁷ Commander-in-Chief, Ukraine’s Air Force: The Situation in Ukrainian Air Force Is Precarious. The Potential Can Be Lost. — *Defense-Express*, <http://www.defense-ua.com/rus/news/?id=1224>.

⁸ Shvyriov V. Land Forces in the Future Will Remain the Most Powerful..., p.4.

⁹ The President of Ukraine at the extended meeting of the Ministry of Defence Board on November 14, 2001 underlined that he was not satisfied with the pace and effectiveness of military reform. In his opinion, they more resemble organisational-staff experiments, which cause material and moral damage, do not result in improvement of the state and combat readiness of the Armed Forces overly resembling a show. See: official web-site of the President of Ukraine, <http://www.kuchma.gov.ua/main/?speech-53>.

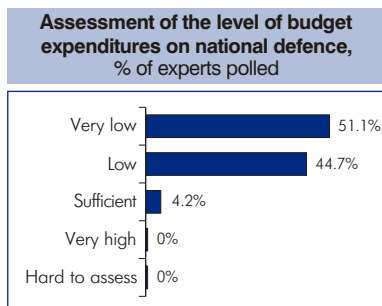


of the military, who are too often placed by others in exceptionally difficult circumstances, trying to juggle “with marginal resources to teach personnel everything they need for war”¹⁰. That key lies unmistakably in the hands of those, which determine the missions for the army, without providing it with the necessary resources for fulfilling these missions.

Defence expenditure from the State budget

The financial needs of the Armed Forces are funded on average at a minimal level of about 40-50% annually. According to Ministry of Defence (MoD) estimates, the minimal needs of the Armed Forces are about UAH 4.5 billion whilst current legislation requires a funding level somewhere around 10-15 times more than the current defence budget¹¹. So, **the level of budget expenditure on national defence is extremely low.**

This is the opinion of the majority (51.1%) of experts polled, who believe that the present level of expenditures on national defence is “very low”, whilst 44.7% consider it to be “low” and only 4.2% consider it to be “sufficient” (Diagram “Assessment of the level of budget expenditures on national defence”).

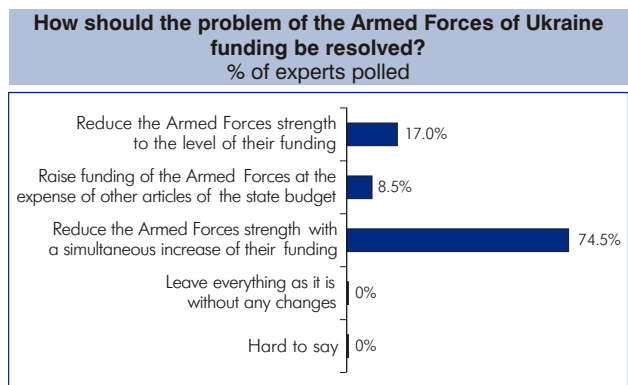


Besides the obvious current limitations of the nation’s limited economic potential and the absence of a direct military threat (which would of course “stimulate” immediate resources for defence), the low level of understanding between the three main participants of the budgetary process (i.e. the Government, Parliament and the Ministry of Defence) has a negative influence on ensuring budget sufficiency for defence. In particular, the Government (represented by the Ministry of Finance) has suggested a target sum needed for Armed Forces reform in 2002 of UAH 69.6 million, which is five times less than in 2001 (UAH 350 million). Parliament increased the cost estimate for reform to UAH 254.6 million, whilst the Ministry of Defence estimated its needs as UAH 450 million. However, another factor is indicative of the problem: on no occasion has defence (and, in particular, the development of Ukraine’s Armed Forces) featured among the Verkhovna Rada’s priorities in its budget resolutions. Other indices are of interest here: — for example, between 1998-2000, Ukraine’s GDP reduced by 0.9% in US dollar equivalent, whilst the military budget “was trimmed” by 1.6 times (from \$685 million to \$440 million)¹².

The situation is complicated, with the Ministry of Defence’s indecision to downsize radically the Armed Forces in line with the State’s budget potential¹³.

MoD of Ukraine agreed to fund 20-30% of its own needs by means of commercial activity. In 2002, out of the total defence budget of UAH 3.29 billion, UAH 607 million need to be found from surplus armaments sales, with UAH 31 million due to come from privatisation of MoD facilities.

According to the overwhelming majority (74.5%) of experts polled, the most optimal solution for Armed Forces funding is a combination approach — **not only increasing Armed Forces’ funding but also downsizing them.** 17.0% of respondents do not see any real military threats, and thus they suggest reducing the Armed Forces strength to a level consistent with their funding. This in effect means downsizing the Armed Forces to 30-40 thousand people. The other 8.5% of experts take an opposite view and propose an increase in Armed Forces’ financing, at the expense of other budget articles (Diagram “How should the problem of the Armed Forces of Ukraine funding be resolved?”).



At the same time, the problem is not only insufficient financial resourcing but also an inability to use effectively the available funds. At the beginning of the 1990s, it is fair to say that the state of the Ukrainian Armed Forces was no worse than that of its neighbours, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. But now, the results of their reforms are completely different. Qualitative changes are taking place in the armies of the above-mentioned countries; they are approaching NATO standards. But the Ukrainian Armed Forces and other military formations are still overstructured, functionally insufficient to carry out modern missions and an economic burden to society and the State.

Armaments and military hardware

Due to lack of financing and proper maintenance, the hardware of the Armed Forces is in trouble. A greater part of it might not be in existence without replacement within 10 years. Some branches and services might have to remain without armaments.

The priorities for armament development in Ukraine today are: development of command and control systems, electronic warfare and reconnaissance systems,

¹⁰ Shvyriov V. Land Forces in the Future Will Remain the Most Powerful... , p.4.

¹¹ Disbalance between the needs and possibilities is catastrophic. Annual debt of the Armed Forces is more than UAH 1 billion and runs up to 90% of MoD budget. See: Andresiuk B. Present State of Ukrainian Armed Forces, Their Financing and Reforming. — *Vysko Ukrainy*, 2001, No.11-12, p.7.

¹² Sungurovskiy M. Defence Reform in Ukraine. Budget and Technical Aspects. — Digest of Conference “NATO-Ukraine — strategic partnership”, 2001, p.96-101.

¹³ According to the estimates made by the leading expert of the National Institute for Strategic Studies A.Pavlenko, the current budget of MoD is only enough to sustain the Armed Forces of 100 000 personnel and 750 pieces of heavy armaments (if monthly salary of officers is \$200-800). See: Materials of NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Economic Security, Kyiv, July 7-8, 2001.

upgrading combat aviation and air defence, development of domestic identification systems, creation of weapons based on new physical principles, and “smart” weapons. It is planned to spend 60% of the Defence Reform budget for these purposes¹⁴. However, the current level of financing prevents these priorities from being implemented.

In 2002, it is planned that 100% of the budget for research and development and armaments procurement will be derived from the Armed Forces commercial activity. According to the then Deputy Minister of Defence for Armaments, A.Stetsenko, only 50% of scientific research and experimental design work and 40% of modernisation and procurement were financed in 2001¹⁵. The in-service life of the greater part (55%) of our armaments exceeds 15 years, particularly combat ships — 82%, missiles and artillery — 67%, air defence missiles — 55%, tanks — 11%¹⁶. The national military industrial complex is capable of satisfying only 5-7% of the Armed Forces needs¹⁷.

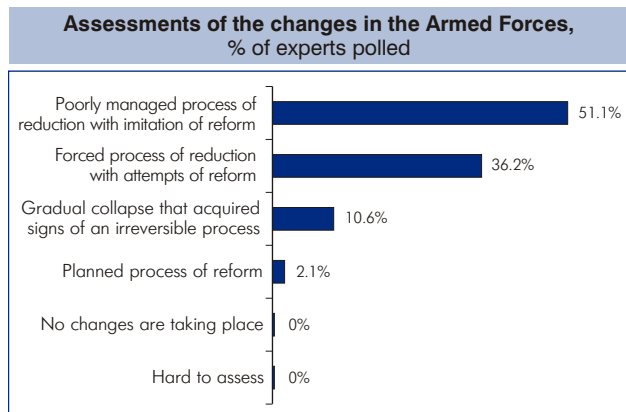
There is an annual deterioration in armaments and military hardware of about 9% (5% — physical and 4% — moral). On the other hand, every 7-10 years the price for new equipment doubles¹⁸. Thus, competing factors are picking up speed and the gap between them is acquiring an avalanche-like momentum: it represents a real danger to the combat readiness of the Armed Forces. Under such conditions, in 5-7 years, not a single branch and service of the Armed Forces will be able to use armaments, without real risk of causing damage to civilians or the military personnel who operate them. In other words, the “Brovary effect” could acquire a national scale.

Neither the Government nor the Ministry of Defence can, at present, find effective ways of solving this problem. Money obtained from surplus armament sales will not be enough to fund the needed orders for defence equipment which, is increasing year on year. The practice of individual power structures developing its own orders does nothing to contribute to a rational, economic or easily executed military-technical policy. Attempts to reconstruct the military industrial complex face the opposition of defence industry directors, a fair proportion of whom are simply not capable of adapting themselves to market economy conditions and to the demands made by an increasingly globalised defence industry¹⁹. The absence of a general strategy for restructuring the economy in the country makes the solution even more complicated. And this goes on from year to year... Maybe the new Parliament will manage to get things moving?

Prospects

In general, the course of military reform in Ukraine at present can hardly satisfy anyone. In order to get some insight into the prospects for further military reform, we need some precise evaluation of reasons for the current state of affairs. The correlation between this evaluation and the forecast developments in the area of security showing the State’s interests and priorities (possibilities, limitations) should illuminate an optimal way to conduct reforms. However, an effective system for strategic assessment and planning has not yet been created in Ukraine. The political will is not sufficient yet to organise this sort of approach. That is why prospects for successful military reform remain vague.

Experts, polled by Razumkov Centre, believe that changes in the Armed Forces are regarded as a “poorly managed process of reduction with imitation reform” (51%), whilst others see them as a “forced process of reduction, with attempts of reform” (36.2%). Every tenth expert (10.6%) thinks that a “gradual collapse that acquired signs of an irreversible process”; only 2.1% are sure that the planned reforms are indeed taking place (diagram “Assessments of the changes in the Armed Forces”).



We consider that **until now reforms in the Armed Forces have resembled a forced process of reduction, with ineffective attempts at reform**. Two reasons should be pointed out among those, which have led to this situation²⁰: a lack of priority for the military by the State authorities and imperfections in the State’s governance system, in the area of security. Without a solution to these problems, waiting for significant progress in military reform is hardly realistic.

¹⁴ The State Programme of Reform and Development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine through 2005. — <http://www.mil.gov.ua>.

¹⁵ Stetsenko A. The Development of Armaments Should Coincide with the Level of Threats. — *Defence-Express*, <http://www.defense-ua.com/rus/hotnews/?id=1821>.

¹⁶ The first interview with the newly appointed Minister of Defence, General of the Army V.Shkidchenko to *Ukrinform* on December 26, 2001. — <http://www.defense-ua.com/rus/news/?id=1478&prm=yes>.

¹⁷ Gorbun V. Defence Construction in Ukraine: Problem Issues of the Military Industrial Complex and Their Solutions. — *Zerkalo Nedeli*, January 27, 2001, p.3.

¹⁸ Assistant to the Minister of Defence of Ukraine on the formation of the budget and economic-financial activity V.Muntiyan: There Is No Reason to Hope for Short-term Effect from Radical Reduction of Ukraine’s Armed Forces. — *Defence-Express*, <http://www.defense-ua.com/rus/news/?id=1863>.

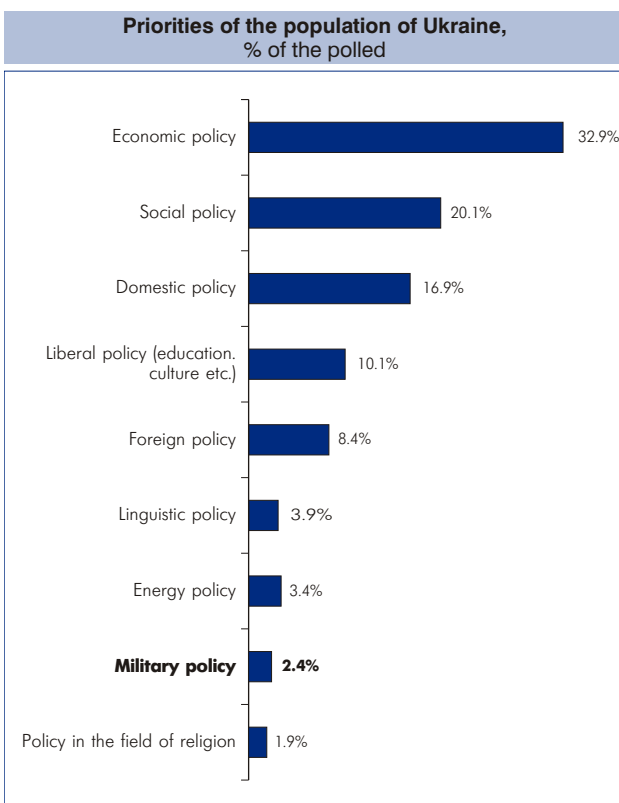
¹⁹ See: Solomatina L. Conversion Strategy of Military-Industrial Complex of Ukraine. — Doctoral thesis in Economics. Institute of Industry’ Economy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Donetsk, 1999, p.234-247.

²⁰ Experts of Razumkov Centre analysed in detail the reasons for the failure of military reform in their previous researches. See: Military Reform in Ukraine: The Start or Another False Start? — *National Security and Defence*, 2000, No.1, p.17-24, <http://www.uceps.com.ua>.



Lack of priority in the military sphere

The lack of priority in the military sphere for the general public is explainable, first of all, by the realisation (not without the help of politicians) that there is little or no military threat, and secondly by the perception that the Armed Forces are an exclusively spending structure — all this against a backdrop of needed emphasis on solving socio-economic problems. Numerous public opinion polls show that our citizens are mostly concerned with socio-economic problems, rather than military ones. This fact was once again demonstrated in a recent sociological poll carried out by Razumkov Centre Sociological Service²¹ (Diagram “*Priorities of the population of Ukraine*”).



It is perfectly natural for people to take such a position, but State authorities are obliged to take care of national interests (including defence) much more than common citizens, who in truth have delegated to the State authorities the right and duty to perform the functions of government on their behalf.

Parliamentarians do not always care actively about military reforms and this is another factor²². The evident revival of attention towards military matters was clear to

all after the tragic events of September 11, 2001 in the USA and indeed on October 4, 2001 in Ukraine. Immediately after these events, politicians called for a strengthening of security and increases in defence expenditure. However, three months later, Ukrainian MPs passed a budget that does not satisfy even the minimum-critical requirements for the Armed Forces. In such a situation, one's conclusion is not comforting — **it is not realistic to wait for an increase in defence expenditure while the importance of the military sphere remains at such a low level.** The leadership of the Ministry of Defence should acknowledge that “during the reforms for next year (2002) the emphasis will be, first of all, on reducing the structure of the Armed Forces and partially on the restructuring of large formations and units. However, it is impossible, unfortunately, to speak about improvements in the quality of combat training, the acquisition of new weapons and the full scale modernisation of what we already have”²³.

Imperfection of the State government system

An effective mechanism for strategic planning — including the formulation of strategic goals and the programme documents that need to underpin them — has not yet been created in Ukraine. The general idea about the primacy of national interests and the necessity for carrying out military reform seems to exist. However, in practice, something more than a general understanding is necessary to achieve concrete results: what is needed is a maximalist vision and tight, accompanying specification of the desired goals and an effective mechanism for converting these into real measures (Diagram “*Algorithm of military reform in Ukraine*”). This does not yet exist.

For example, the goal of “bringing the Armed Forces closer to proper European standards” is defined in the President's Decree “On Measures for further Strengthening of State Defence”²⁴. To achieve this goal, there is no doubt that concrete political decisions by the NSDC and other structures are necessary, as well as specific legislative acts, plans and instructions for making the transition from the present post-soviet norms and standards, towards European or more properly NATO standards, which regulate the functioning of the core European armies²⁵.

Practice proves that general declarations are simply not enough; the cause moves ahead slowly, without concrete decisions, or skids along the way. There is a similar situation, for example, in the sphere of national shipbuilding: “Today the majority of domestic military shipbuilding experts seem to understand that it is necessary to accept Western systems, which exceed in all aspects their Russian equivalents, being more compact, less energy-consuming, better protected against counter-measures. But this should be a political decision, which nobody in Ukraine so far wants to make”²⁶.

²¹ Poll has been carried out on January 8-16, 2002; 2019 Ukrainian citizens aged 18 and above were polled in all regions of Ukraine.

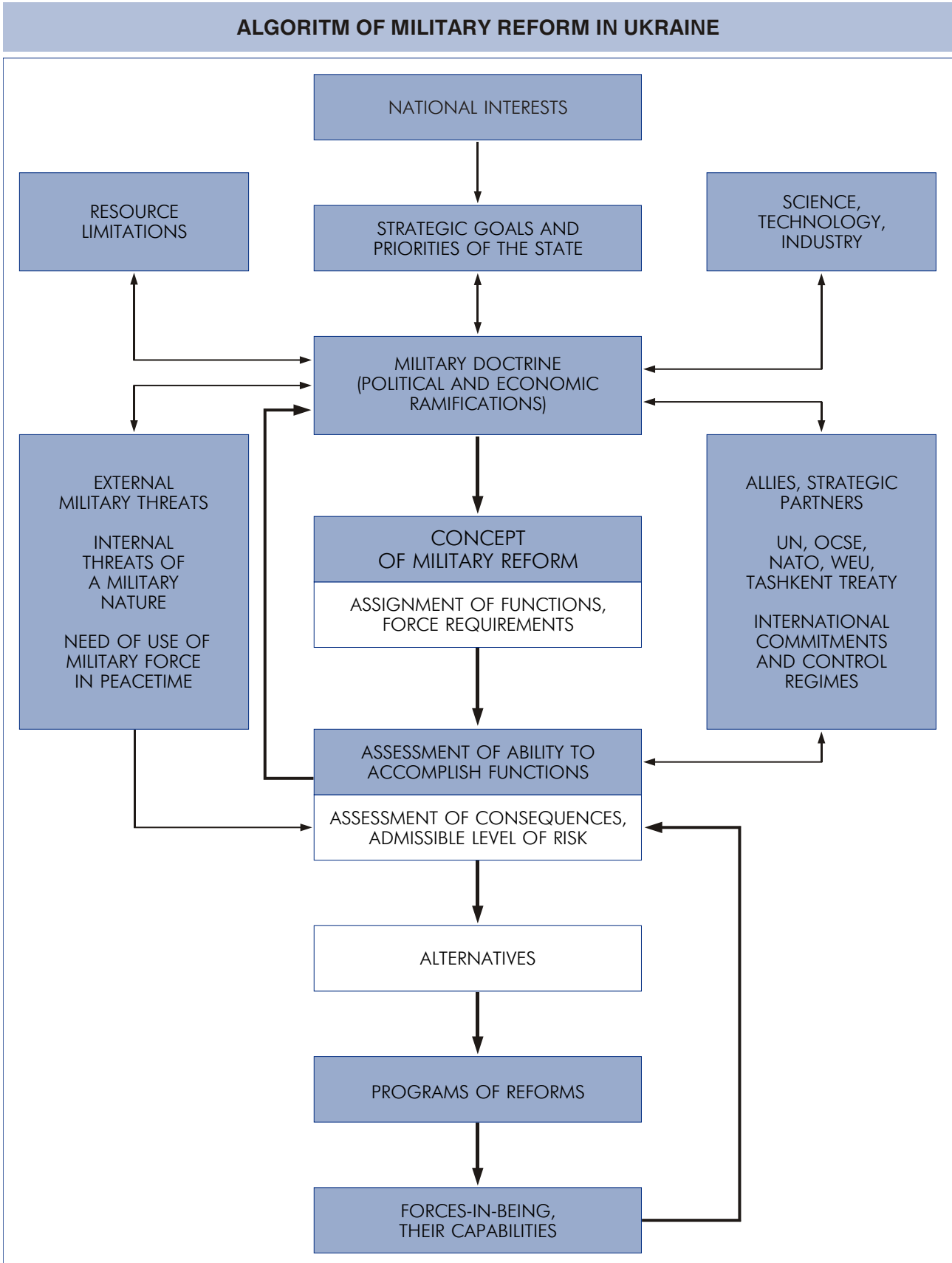
²² If one analyses the results of voting on draft laws on military issues, it becomes clear, that adherence to the principles of factions with different political orientations refers mostly to the issues of foreign policy, economy and social protection, but concerning the specific measures of reforming the Armed Forces, a principal difference in their approaches is not observed.

²³ Minister of Defence of Ukraine V.Shkidchenko. See: Military Reform. On the Spot, Double-Quick! — *Defense-Express*, <http://www.defense-ua.com/rus/hot-news/?id=1458>.

²⁴ Decree of the President of Ukraine “On Measures of Further Strengthening the State Defence” No.1195 of December 6, 2001. See: official web-site of the President of Ukraine, <http://www.kuchma.gov.ua/main/?whatto=434>.

²⁵ See: note 4.

²⁶ See: Military Shipbuilding of Ukraine: Reality and Perspectives. Interview with the Chief Designer S.Kryvko. — *Arms Export and the Defence Complex of Ukraine: News and Analysis*, 2002, No.1, p.9.





Two other examples: the delay in transferring strategic bombers to Russia has resulted in losing perhaps up to twice the price that could have been obtained earlier. Reluctance over the last decade to downsize drastically the Armed Forces has resulted in an accumulation of a considerable surplus of armaments and military equipment that are uncompetitive. In consequence, the military leadership has agreed to hand this sort of kit over to other countries for almost nothing, in order to save money for maintenance.

At the same time, making unresearched decisions, as well as delayed decisions, can lead to negative consequences. The version of the Armed Forces transition to contract service personnel, (“transition to completely professional army”) approved by the President of Ukraine might yet become such an example as far as it does not seem to comply with the nation’s economic potential.

Economic conditions for the introduction of a completely professional army cannot yet be considered favourable for Ukraine. According to estimates of military experts, maintaining professional Armed Forces of 150,000 personnel, in compliance with NATO standards, will cost \$3.2-3.4 billion²⁷, whereas the 2002 defence budget will be UAH 3.29 billion (which is five times less).

Even now, it is obvious that the parameters for the future professional army (240,000 personnel in 2015²⁸) are not achievable. Approximate calculations show that if the Armed Forces’ reforms are carried out in line with the planned pace and economic growth up to 2015 as anticipated, the Armed Forces will be able to achieve a level of \$5,000 per serviceman for defence expenditure. But even this rate is three to four times less than achieved by NATO members’ armed forces from Eastern Europe, and 18-20 times less than that of France and Germany.

If one can accept the following data for our professional army calculations: a defence budget of 2% of GDP, its per capita sum (per serviceman) of minimum \$20,000, and an Armed Forces strength of 100,000 troops (not 240,000, as in the approved Programme), then the national GDP would have to be approximately \$100 billion (for 2002 forecasts indicate it will be \$46.7 billion). The calculations show that even if the annual economic growth rate makes up for 6% of GDP, the required GDP level will only be achieved in 30 years, remembering that this is for 100,000, rather than the currently planned 240,000 personnel!

Thus, **without radical decisions regarding the downsizing of the Armed Forces (not in %, but in multiples) it would not be possible to achieve European standards.** In order to stop the process of deterioration in combat readiness and to guarantee the Armed Forces’ gradual development, it is necessary for political leaders to have the vision of how the national security situation might develop, and of the role of the Armed Forces and its implementation: they would also need the capability to define accurate, strategic aims and to make decisive steps in organising and managing the process to achieve these goals. A crucial point is to find the right balance for Ukraine between defence needs and the resource capabilities of the State.

While the international situation remains more or less favourable, it is expedient to reduce radically the number of personnel in the Armed Forces. It is necessary to free the resources and reallocate them to procurement of modern armament and to modernising the military, manning soldiers and sergeants’ posts by contract servicemen. Otherwise, we will waste time and money — and remain without a modern army.

Conclusions

Despite progress in some spheres of reform, the Armed Forces continue to remain in crisis. The levels of professionalism, financial, material and technical support in the Armed Forces are very low.

The Armed Forces in their present state, as well as other military formations, are incapable to defend the State and the people against a full-scale military threat. At the same time, the maintenance of the present strength of the Armed Forces is a task beyond the ability of the State.

It is useless to wait for an increase in defence expenditure. Without radical reduction, the Army will go on “eating away” at the defence budget and the technical level of armaments and military hardware will continue to get worse. While the current relatively favourable situation remains, it is time to reduce the Armed Forces.

Military reforms will not make any improvements until the military are a priority for the State authorities of Ukraine. Sharpness of national vision and strong political will are both necessary for the success of reforms. For the present moment, these qualities are scarce in Ukraine.

Without urgent improvement in the State’s management system for security matters, it is pointless to wait for the successful resolution of the problems of military reforms. ■

²⁷ Matiukh M. Professional Army. Under What Conditions It Will Become Reality? — *Narodna armiya*, April 21, 2000, p.3.

²⁸ The President of Ukraine Decree “On Concept of Transition of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to Staffing on Contract Basis through 2015”, No.239 of April 7, 2001. See: official web-site of the President of Ukraine, <http://www.kuchma.gov.ua/main/?whatto-125>.