

NATO IN THE UKRAINIAN TV NEWS BROADCASTS AND POLITICAL PROGRAMMES

Public opinion polls prove that television is the main source of information for the Ukrainian citizens: more than 80% of those polled have reported that they learn about political and other developments in Ukraine from TV programmes¹. Thus, when the level of public awareness on NATO and Ukraine's relations with the Alliance are considered, it makes sense to analyse the ways in which this organisation is covered by the lead Ukrainian TV channels.

Presented below are the data describing the current interest of television in NATO-related problems, the context of their coverage, and its key: positive, neutral, questionable, or negative. In order to obtain the data news broadcasts and political programmes of 10 Ukrainian TV channels, transmitted over a week in prime time, were monitored.

NATO in news broadcasts

Monitoring results show that recently, the attention of the Ukrainian television to NATO has been moderate, but still greater than during the parliamentary election campaign of 2006. Say, while in October, 2005, NATO was mentioned in 0.7% of all news broadcasts, in February, 2006, in the heat of the election campaign – in 2.5%, in October, 2006 – in 3% of all reports (5.2% of the news air time). The main transmitters, of NATO-related information are the news programmes of such channels as UT-1, Inter, and the TRC Ukrayina. The list of TV channels focusing on the Alliance was topped by news broadcasts of 1+1 Studio².

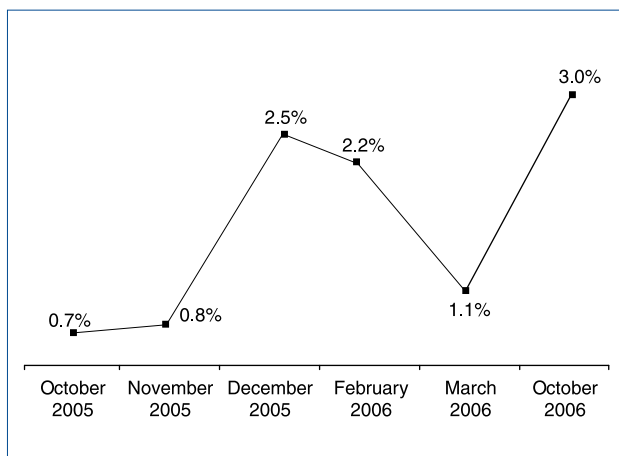
The NATO issues in the news are presented as mainly domestic, and secondary for Ukraine. Most reports deal

with events in Ukraine and Ukraine-NATO relations; in 77% of all reports, the NATO issue was supplementary to the focal point. Most often, news broadcasts cover the prospects of Ukraine's accession to the Alliance.

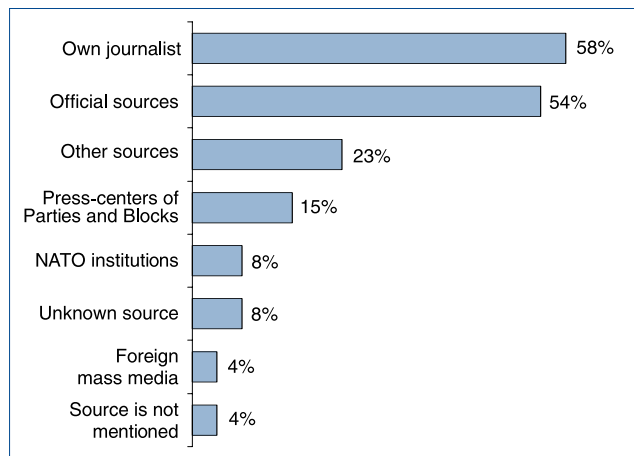
According to the monitoring results, the TV channels' own journalists (58%) and Ukrainian official institutions (54%) were the main sources of reports on NATO, when NATO institutions were mentioned as a source only in 8% of all reports³.

NATO issues are mainly commented on by journalists (50%) and politicians (46%); experts are almost not involved in the discussion (4%). Opinions of ordinary citizens (23%) and assessments of international organisations (23% and 19%, respectively) were presented more often than expert opinions (19%).

Attention to NATO in news broadcasts,
% of NATO-related reports in news on Ukraine



Mentioned sources of information,
% of all NATO-related reports

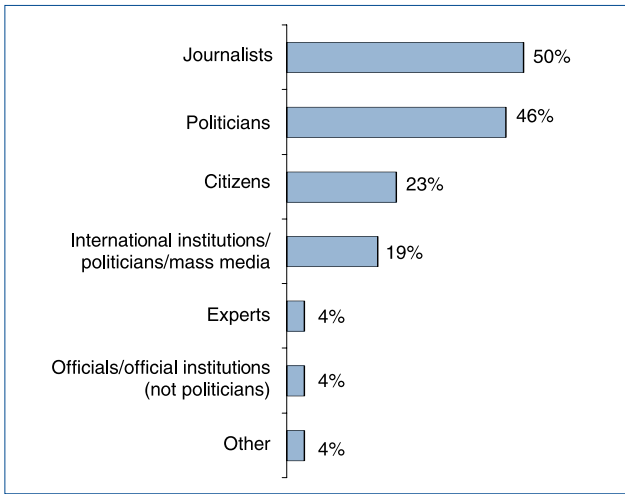


¹ The poll was held on November 18 – 25, 2005. 2001 respondents over 18 were polled in all regions of Ukraine. Theoretical sample error does not exceed 2.3%. Respondents were supposed to note one out of 27 sources of information mentioned in the questionnaire.

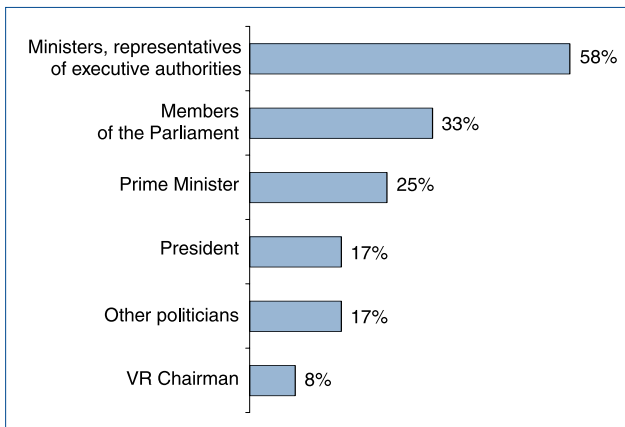
² In course of the week – five news reports, 11 reports in political programmes, one subject talk show in prime time.

³ Sometimes one report builds on several sources, so the aggregate exceeds 100%.

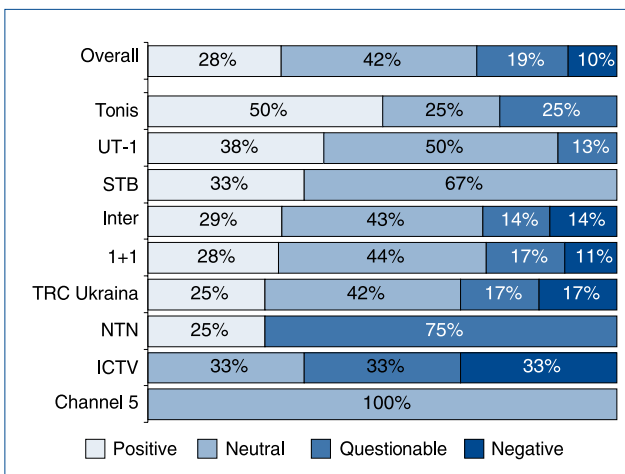
Who assessed/commented on the NATO-related issues,
% of all NATO-related reports



Who assessed/commented on the NATO-related issues among the policy makers,
% of all NATO-related reports



NATO assessments in the news,
% of all NATO assessments



Among the policy makers, the floor is given mainly to the Ministers (58%) and the Members of Parliament (33%). Among the top state officials, the subjects were the most often commented on by Ukraine's Prime Minister V. Yanukovich (25%), President V. Yushchenko (17%) and the Verkhovna Rada Chairman O. Moroz (8%). Most of the party spokesmen represented the Our Ukraine Bloc (12%) and the Party of Regions (4%).

One point of view and the neutral wording dominate in the majority of all NATO-related reports, but channels seriously differ in their disposition to the Alliance: its positive or negative image⁴. In news broadcasts, NATO is mainly covered neutrally (42% of assessments). At the same time, there is a manifest balance of polar assessments (28% positive vs. 19% questionable and 10% negative).

Positive assessments of NATO dominate over questionable and negative ones on such channels as Tonis (50% vs. 25%, respectively); UT-1 (38% vs. 13%, respectively); STB (33% vs. 0%, respectively).

Presentation of NATO issues as questionable and negative is mainly practiced by NTN (75% and 25%, respectively); TRC Ukraina (34% and 25%, respectively); ICTV (67% and 0%, respectively).

NATO in political programmes

Political programmes of Ukrainian TV channels present the topic NATO fragmentarily, and are overshadowed by other problems. Ukraine's accession to NATO is the main subject of discussion, usually combined with Ukraine's relations with Russia and the EU countries⁵.

NATO was mentioned in 38% of political programmes (12% of the air time). Out of five political programmes, one was entirely devoted to NATO, in four, the NATO subject was additional. 1+1 channel shows the greatest attention to NATO, with the subject discussed by representatives of different political forces, including from Russia.

NATO-related developments are mainly commented on and assessed by politicians and journalists; the share of experts, speaking on the subject, is three times lower.

Among the policy makers, NATO-related developments are mainly commented on and assessed by the representatives of the People's Union "Our Ukraine", Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc, the Party of Regions, Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU), along with Russian politicians.

Overall, NATO assessments in political programmes are more varied compared to news reports. Neutral assessments are much fewer (29% in political programmes vs. 42% in news broadcasts); the share of positive opinions is actually the same (29% in political programmes vs. 28% in news broadcasts), but questionable and especially negative ones are more manifest (22% vs. 19% and 20% vs. 10%, respectively).

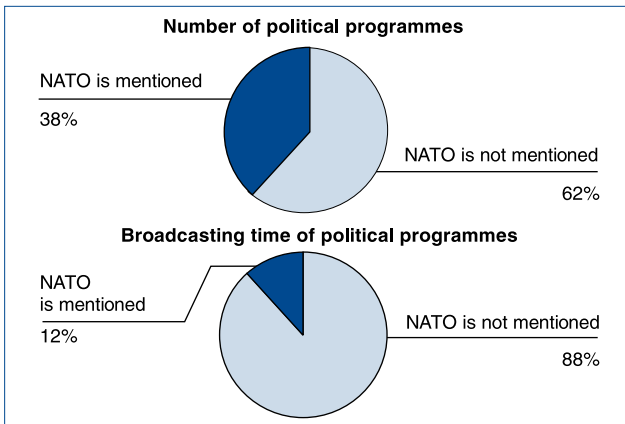
Hence, formally, the balance of assessments tends to be positive and neutral. However, questionable and especially negative opinions are more manifest in political programmes than in news broadcasts. Overall, the assessments of NATO

⁴ As a rule, NATO-related developments are commented on in news broadcasts from one viewpoint only (71%). Where NATO is the focal point of a report, a few points of view are presented, as a rule (83%, against 17% of reports commented one-sidedly); where the NATO subject is secondary, the ratio is just the opposite (86% against 14%).

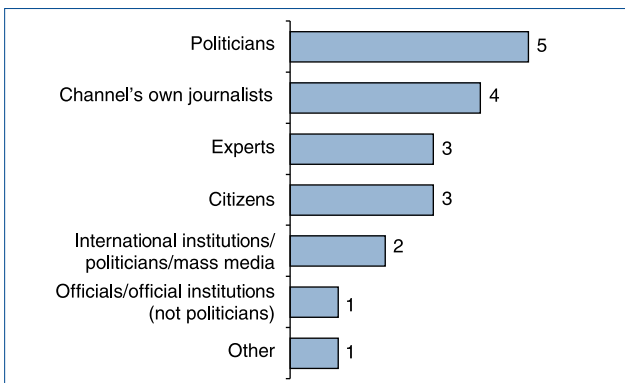
⁵ Other subjects discussed included: decisions of Parliament, the Government and the President dealing with NATO; NATO programmes and projects in other countries; local events and the attitude of Ukraine's population to NATO. As a rule, political programmes build on documents, in particular, the survey recorded references to Ukrainian laws and documents dealing with NATO, joint Ukraine-NATO documents, NATO documents.



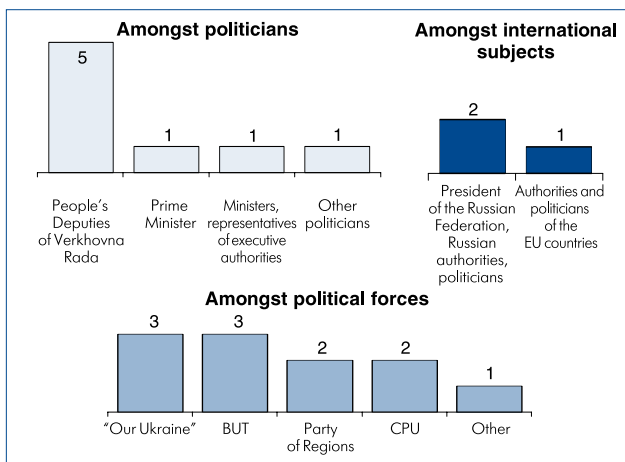
**Attention to NATO in political programmes,
% of NATO mentions**



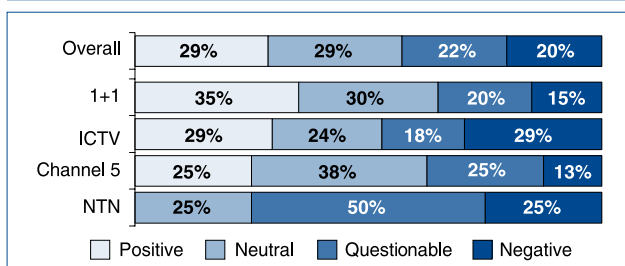
**Who assessed/commented on the NATO-related issues,
as % of all programmes where NATO was discussed**



**Who assessed/commented on the NATO-related issues,
% of all programmes where NATO was discussed**



**NATO assessments in political programmes,
% of all NATO assessments**



and NATO-related issues depend on the programme scheme and the position of one or another channel.

1+1 is the only channel where positive judgments do not yield to questionable and negative (35% vs. 20% and 15%, respectively). An example of parity in positive and negative judgments is presented by the *Svoboda Slova* programme on ICTV (29% to 29%). On other channels, questionable and negative assessments strongly dominate. This is specific of NTN (*Vchasno Pro Holovne*), where the examined week saw mainly opponents of accession to NATO (75% of questionable and negative opinions).

CONCLUSIONS

Today, the NATO subject is covered by the Ukrainian television more actively even than during the 2006 parliamentary election campaign, when political forces actively speculated on it in for canvassing.

Meanwhile, information on the Alliance available on Ukrainian TV channels is fragmentary and presented in the context of Ukrainian developments as supplementary and subsidiary. The main sources of information on NATO are the TV channels' own journalists and official Ukrainian institutions. The Alliance itself is very rarely a source of such information.

The discussion mainly focuses on the subject of Ukraine's accession to NATO, usually discussed in the context of its relations with Russia and the EU countries.

The NATO-related problems are mainly commented on by politicians, including Russian (which surely imparts such information a political tint), and journalists. Expert opinions are presented poorly, representatives of the Alliance and/or NATO member states – very poorly.

Formally, most TV channels try to keep balance, but negative judgments are generally more manifest.

By and large, there are no grounds to speak about a target-minded PR campaign intended to raise public awareness of the Alliance, its goals, lines and sense of activity. In fact, television presents the position of separate political forces on NATO and Ukraine's accession to it.

The monitoring was held on request of the Razumkov Centre by the Academy of Ukrainian Press and Sociology Institute of the National Academy of Science of Ukraine. The aim of the survey was to assess the attention and attitudes towards NATO in news reports and political programmes of the Ukrainian television. The survey covered 10 channels: UT-1; Channel 5; Tonis; NTN; 1+1; Inter; Novy Channel; STB; TRC Ukraina, ICTV.

The survey was conducted by the method of report content analysis and their differentiation dependent on the assessment: positive; neutral; questionable; negative.

The monitoring was held on October 13 – 19, 2006 (one week), in the evening (in prime time). 64 news programmes were monitored on 10 TV channels, plus 13 political programmes on six TV channels.

News broadcasts: *Visti* (YT-1; 21.00); *TSN* (1+1; 19.30); *Podrobnosti* (Inter; 21.00); *Reporter* (Novy Channel (19.00); *Fakty* (ICTV; 18.45); *Vikna* (STB; 22.00); *Sobytyiya* (TRC Ukrayina; 21.00); *Chas* (Channel 5; 19.00); *24 Hodyny* (Tonis; 18.40); *Vchasno* (NTN; 19.00).

Political programmes: *Tochka Zoru* (UT-1); *Epitsentr, Ya Tak Dumayu* (1+1); *Podrobnosti Iz Pervykh Ust* (Inter); *Svoboda Slova* (ICTV); *Maydan, 5 Kopyok* (Channel 5); *Vchasno Pro Holovne* (NTN; five broadcasts).

The monitoring recorded: news broadcasts – 725 reports, 26 of them containing mentions of NATO; political programmes – five programmes dealing with NATO: *Ya Tak Dumayu* (1+1); *Svoboda Slova* (ICTV); *5 Kopyok* (Channel 5); *Vchasno Pro Holovne* (NTN, two programmes).