

1. What would, today, be the net difference between the two directions that the post-Soviet states *could* have taken: Soviet-style union versus independence?

2. It would be interesting to make a list of the various reasons for which each of the former Soviet Republics chose independence. Ethnicity, nationalistic fervor, wealth for oligarchs, personal political power?

3. Is there a case to be made that Russia actually got rid of liabilities by having all the republics go independent? Would a different Russian leader have capitalized on focusing on *Russian* interests and economic development, versus imperial interests?

4. Was a Putin-like leader inevitable?

5. What actual benefit would Russia get from conquering Ukraine today? Benefits that it could not get peacefully, through trade, etc.?

6. Apart the confluence of Neo-Conservative and Neo-Liberal imperial ambitions under Bush and Obama, what is the **net benefit** to the United States from an independent Ukraine with weakened ties to Russia?