

The Ukraine List (UKL) #429
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First UKL since June 18. I have been unable, as of yet, to locate the exact texts of the failed parliamentary resolutions on Georgia (item 3). The resolution by the Tymoshenko Bloc, submitted by MP Ivan Kyrylenko, was voted down by Our Ukraine and everyone else, while several variations of a Our Ukraine resolution were voted down by the Tymoshenko Bloc and everyone else. As indicated below, a failed Communist Party resolution recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia did garner the support of eighty percent of Party of Regions MPs. That post-Orange political parties are incapable of sharing power should be fairly clear by now. –DA

1-Kyiv Post: Pro-Western Coalition Crumbles as President Warns of Political Coup

2-Nezvisimaia gazeta: Tymoshenko Demands An Apology [UKL translation]

3-Ukrainska pravda: Rada Unable to Vote on Georgia [UKL translation]

4-Partyofregions.org: Yanukovych Calls for Recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia [UKL translation]

5-NUNS.com: Declaration of the Presidium of the People's Union "Our Ukraine" [UKL translation]

6-Ukrainska pravda: Tymoshenko's Address Concerning Events in the Verkhovna Rada [UKL translation]

7-Ukrainska pravda: Yushchenko's Address Concerning the Situation in the Rada [UKL translation]

8-Pressé Kiev: Tymoshenko/Yanukovych Wants to Raise Threshold to 10% [UKL translation]

9-<http://blog.taraskuzio.net>: Did I Cause a Split in the Party of Regions?

10-Eurasia Daily Monitor: Taras Kuzio, Party of Regions Splits over Georgia and NATO

11-Kyiv Post: David Marples, Divided Nation Own Worst Enemy in Countering Russia

12-BBC: Alarm Bells in Ukraine

13-Kyiv Post: Roman Kupchinsky, Ukraine Can Avoid Georgia's Missteps

14-New Book: Sarah D. Phillips, Women's Social Activism in the New Ukraine

15-New Book: Peter W. Rodgers, Identity Politics in Ukraine 1991-2006

16-New Book: Tanya Richardson, Kaleidoscopic Odessa: History and Place in Contemporary Ukraine

17-New Book: Georgeta Pourchot, Eurasia Rising Democracy and Independence in the Post-Soviet Space

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#1

Pro-Western Coalition Crumbles as President Warns of Political Coup

by Stephen Bandera

Kyiv Post, 4 September 2008

Infighting among the country's top politicians got uglier this week, as the pro-Western coalition all but collapsed and President Yushchenko threatened to dismiss parliament for the second time in two years

Infighting among the country's top politicians got uglier this week, as the proWestern coalition all but collapsed and President Victor Yushchenko threatened to dismiss parliament for the second time in two years – all on the eve of crucial international talks on Ukraine's place in Europe and NATO.

The fragile marriage between Orange Revolution leaders President Victor Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko has been in poor shape for several months.

But both – expected to spar for the presidential job in the 2010 election – have effectively served divorce papers on each other. Apparently, it's a done deal this time, ending the governing coalition and parliamentary majority they created eight months ago.

The acrimony comes days ahead of key international meetings concerning Ukraine's future, including a Sept. 45 visit from U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney and a Sept. 9 European Union-Ukraine meeting in Evian, France, to discuss ways to strengthen ties.

The breaking point in the YushchenkoTymoshenko partnership appeared to have come over accusations from Victor Baloha, the president's chief of staff, that the prime minister is a traitor for not denouncing the Aug. 8 Russian invasion of Georgia. In a recent letter to Ukraine's State Security Service, Baloha also accused Tymoshenko of trying to kill him.

On Sept. 3, the scant chance of reconciliation appeared to rest on Yushchenko's response to a demand from the Tymoshenko side that, if the president gets rid of Baloha and apologizes, the coalition might be saved.

If not, a strange parliamentary majority could form composed of Tymoshenko's eponymous bloc known as BYuT, the Communists and her Orange Revolution foes, the Party of Regions.

The troika joined forces in parliament on the Verkhovna Rada's first day back from the summer holidays on Sept. 2, providing the 300plus votes in a 450seat legislature to override a presidential veto, adopt legislation on impeachment and increase powers for the legislature at the expense of presidential rights.

Yushchenko said the nation is witnessing “the beginning of a political and constitutional coup” and that these laws impose the “dictatorship of the prime minister.”

“All these anticonstitutional laws will be vetoed,” he said in a televised address to the nation on Sept. 3.

Yushchenko said the events in the Rada ended the existence of the democratic coalition, and that “de facto, a new parliamentary coalition has been created.” He then went on to threaten an early election if a new alliance is not formalized within 30 days after the breakup of the previous coalition, the deadline allowed by the Constitution.

“If a coalition of deputies’ factions is not created in the time period allotted by Ukraine’s fundamental law, I will use my right to dismiss the Supreme Rada and announce preterm elections,” he said.

Escalating the conflict even further, 11 ministers loyal to the president out of 24 did not attend the cabinet’s weekly meeting on Sept. 3, including those for defense, justice and foreign affairs. The health, youth and sports, emergencies, cultural and education ministers did not show up. But Tymoshenko still had a quorum to run the meeting.

In a televised address to Ukrainians late on Sept. 3, Tymoshenko accused Yushchenko of sabotaging the coalition and her government for the purpose of scoring political points in his re-election campaign.

She said the president went “to the edge” to get a boost in his ratings.

“Even though there is practically no chance, [the president’s advisers] are lost in their mindless fight,” she added.

Recent polls show that Tymoshenko is the top contender for the next presidential contest with just more than 20 percent support, followed closely by Yanukovich. Yushchenko trails far behind with less than 10 percent support.

Tymoshenko also refuted claims that she was soft in her support for Georgia, saying: “My position on Georgia is in line with the European Union, and it is not to drag Ukraine into conflicts.”

Tymoshenko also pledged her party would push – supposedly with the votes of Regions, Communists and possibly other parties, to reshape Ukraine’s Constitution. The purpose, she said, is to clearly divide authority among the president, premier and parliament.

This, what seems to be the real divorce of Ukraine’s two Orange Revolution heroes before they start to spar for the presidential seat, follows years of backstabbing. Both onetime allies appear to have completely turned into bitter rivals and are preparing for the cutthroat presidential contest ahead.

More mess and fighting

After the latest chopping at presidential powers, Baloha accused the troika led by Tymoshenko

of usurping power and preparing a constitutional coup, whose goals are a twoparty system and the elimination of the executive branch. Their “conductors are their ideologues and patrons in Moscow who seek revenge for the events of 2004 and make Ukraine a controlled country ... a useful tool in Russia’s geopolitical and geoeconomic interests,” he said in a statement released by the Secretariat.

Baloha accused Tymoshenko of teaming up with Victor Medvedchuk – the man who headed ex-president Leonid Kuchma’s presidential administration earlier this decade – to create a crisis situation in Ukraine. Baloha, himself an ally of Medvedchuk, also accused Tymoshenko of “constantly and systematically blocking the performance of the coalition agreement” between her party and the president’s grouping.

In the midst of the turmoil, some members of the dying coalition called for it to be preserved. A small grouping of lawmakers from the propresidential bloc urged Yushchenko to dismiss Baloha, whom they view as a troublemaker.

There were no signs that the president’s office would act on the ultimatum by the time the Kyiv Post went to print.

Experts say if the RegionsBYuT tandem is formalized in parliament, it would be unstable, leading to yet another snap election. Yet both camps could stick with a situational partnership to contain Yushchenko, keeping him in check with the threat of impeachment.

If, on the other hand, no official parliamentary majority is formed in the next month, the legal grounds for dismissing the Rada and holding repeat elections to the national legislature will arise.

Antipresidential legislation

The turmoil erupted late on Sept. 2, when Tymoshenko's faction and Regions combined their 331 votes in the 450member chamber to finally elect the Rada’s two deputy speakers from among their own ranks. The key Rada posts have been vacant since Rada elections nearly one year ago. Regions’ Oleksandr Lavrynovych and BYuT’s Mykola Tomenko took flanking seats on the presidium, adjacent to Speaker Arseniy Yatseniuk, a staunch Yushchenko ally.

Yatseniuk and most propresidential lawmakers stormed out of the Rada after the newly formed alliance rushed – and within one hour adopted legislation undercutting presidential authority.

Experts said the Regions Party, Yulia Tymoshenko bloc and Communists had varying motives for joining forces against Yushchenko. Some of them find him personally objectionable; others consider him a weak politician, or just wanted to weaken the presidency, regardless of who holds the office.

Whatever the motives, in just two votes, the freshlybaked majority clearly spelled out the presidential impeachment process. They established an ad hoc parliament investigative commission that would swiftly be able to handle an impeachment process.

According to the new procedure, the deputies have to vote by a simple majority to create this new special commission to investigate “state treason or other crime committed by the president.” After two months of investigation, the commission would have to have its results approved by parliament and then send them on to the Constitutional and the Supreme Courts. If the courts rule the commission’s claims legitimate, the Rada could drive the final nail into the head of state’s political coffin.

The bill’s author, BYuT’s Andriy Portnov, also penned amendments to the Law on Cabinet of Ministers that eliminates six presidential rights and powers over executive branch appointments, governmental orders and agreements with foreign governments.

Portnov said the changes will be “yet another step towards building Ukraine as a democratic state” and fully abide by the Constitution.

The powers of the presidency were curtailed by the changes made to the Constitution in the heat of the 2004 Orange Revolution, when Yushchenko agreed to a compromise deal that paved the way for him to the presidency.

After a decade of presidential rule under Leonid Kuchma, many politicians are calling for a weaker chief of state, a move that would turn Ukraine into a fullfledged parliamentary system.

#2

Tymoshenko Demands an Apology

Yushenko’s Supporters Prevented Him for Turning Up in Parliament

by Tatyana Ivzhenko

Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Russia), 3 September 2008

[translated by Lisa Koriouchkina for UKL]

The Verhovna Rada session started with a surprise. President Viktor Yushchenko did not arrive to the parliamentary assembly hall even though his speech to the deputies was announced earlier. However, the PM Yulia Tymoshenko showed up instead.

Intrigue did not last long. In his introductory remarks, a leader of the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (BYuT) Ivan Kirilenko proposed that his colleagues first discuss a range of extremely important economic questions that the head of government had most probably arrived to support in person. Tymoshenko’s supporters recommended that the Verkhovna Rada articulates its position regarding the conflict in the Caucasus later.

However, Viktor Yushchenko’s supporters from the fraction “Our Ukraine – National Self-defense” (NUNS) did not agree with this. They demanded that their partners from BYuT immediately finalize a resolution regarding South Ossetia and Abkhazia. It was suggested that the document would also include Ukraine’s reaction to the role of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in the conflict. Given that members of the nominally existing governing coalition could not agree on a position regarding these points, Yushchenko’s visit to the Verkhovna Rada’s Assembly became meaningless. Moreover, the parliamentary fraction BYuT announced yesterday that it will not partake in any negotiations until Yushchenko and the head of the President’s

administration Viktor Baloha apologize to Yulia Tymoshenko for their humiliating suspicions of state treason. A presidential press-service did not comment on any of this and only released a meaningless statement “The President is working according to his schedule.”

In the end, it turned out that neither Yushchenko nor Tymoshenko won, and once more the BYuT-NUNS coalition has proven its inability to function, as Volodymyr Lytvyn, a leader of a fraction that did not join either majority or the opposition, said yesterday. He reminded that the head of government’s supporters have disrupted Yushchenko’s address to the deputies three times already. And in between quarrels, formal allies accuse each other of betraying national interests and of state treason, Lytvyn said. He reminded that last spring BYuT representatives accused Yushchenko on similar grounds. Now, members of the President’s team accuse Tymoshenko of an illicit agreement with Russian authorities in order to ensure victory during the 2010 Presidential elections. “Just tell me, [do you] need such authorities? Perhaps, a different kind of peoples are needed for such authorities” – Lytvyn said. He appealed to the President to explain to deputies “what’s going on in the country and who is responsible for all of this.” He then concluded that Verkhovna Rada is incapacitated.

It was expected that the process could go late into the night given that the first point on the agenda was an evaluation of the situation in the Caucasus. Fractions and single deputies registered nearly a dozen different versions of decrees and statements, one of which was meant to become a Verkhovna Rada’s official position. Given that all of them reflected different and contradictory positions, the introduction of these documents lasted until the evening. The Party of Regions carefully avoided a discussion of who is right and who is wrong but acknowledged the right of peoples of Abkhazia and the Southern Ossetia for self-determination. Communists firmly held a position on “Georgian aggression” and demanded a trial over the “pro-American puppet regimes of Saakashvili and Yushchenko.” Various documents of the pro-presidential fraction evaluated events more or less evenly and moderately: some acknowledged the fact of “Russian military aggression,” others focused attention on a need to regulate the Russian Black Sea Fleet presence on the territory of Ukraine and to secure the territorial integrity of the country through a collective system of security (allegedly, NATO). Tymoshenko’s and Yushchenko’s supporters unequivocally agreed only recognizing the territorial integrity of Georgia and condemning the recognition of Abkhazia and the Southern Ossetia’s independence. At the time of getting this newspaper issue to print, neither of the suggested proposals was voted on. [However, behind curtains, deputies of different political camps admitted a possibility that heated discussions would result in nothing, and neither document will gather a necessary number of votes. Note from UKL: all of them were defeated, see below]. Morning ultimatums precluded Orangist fractions from a final agreement, and the Party of the Regions did not agree with Communists’ radical assessments.

Even though, formally speaking, the Verkhovna Rada began its work, the situation quickly reached a dead end. Volodymyr Lytvyn is confident that only new extraordinary elections could change the situation. But the head of Verkhovna Rada Arseniy Yatsenyuk is sure that new elections will not happen until the spring of 2009. Even prior to the first parliamentary meeting, a member of the Party of the Regions Volodymyr Sivkovych said in an interview to a newspaper “Delo” that Viktor Yanukovych’s followers will wait until September 4th. He emphasized that the formally existing coalition has had less than 226 deputies for quite some time.

“This week, the Constitutional Court is supposed to clarify this situation, and then the coalition will cease to exist. Then, a new coalition will have 30 days to form – to form a new government” – he further elaborated. In anticipation of an important decision, deputies left a discussion of procedures that would significantly simplify President’s impeachment until the evening. All fractions but the Presidential one agreed on this position. Yanukovich’s ally Olena Lukash explained: “Only 3-5% is actually supporting Viktor Yushchenko. It is less than what Kuchma had at the beginning of the Orange Revolution. Trust me, you do not represent the will of the people” – she addressed her political opponents. Yulia Tymoshenko was not in the assembly hall at that moment, she left earlier without saying goodbye.

#3

The Rada was Unable to Say Anything about Georgia
Ukrains’ka pravda, 2 September 2008
[translated by Yulia Yarotska for UKL]

The Verkhovna Rada did not pass any resolution regarding the recent events in Georgia.

In particular, a resolution proposed by Volodymyr Arieu [of Our Ukraine] gathered 65 votes (64 from Our Ukraine/National Self Defense [NUNS] and one from the Tymoshenko Bloc [BYuT]), a resolution by Yuri Kostenko [of Our Ukraine] – 66 votes (63 from NUNS and 3 from BYuT), one by Petro Symonenko [leader of the Communist Party] – 196 (Communist Party of Ukraine [KPU], Party of Regions [PR]), one by Viacheslav Kyrylenko [leader of Our Ukraine] – 72 (67 from NUNS and 5 from BYuT), one by Olena Lukash [of the Party of Regions] – 201 (KPU, PR and one vote from BYuT), one by Ivan Kyrylenko [of the Tymoshenko Bloc] – 167 [152 from BYuT, 15 from NUNS], one by [Borys] Tarasiuk [of NUNS] – 70, and by one by Kilinkarov [of the Communist Party of Ukraine] on recognizing South Ossetia and Abkhazia – 167 votes [140 from the Party of Regions – out of 175 – and all 27 members of the KPU faction].

The Verhovna Rada’s Speaker, Mr. Yatsenyuk, characterized the voting on the Kilinkarov’s proposition as a “demonstrative model” [duzhe pokazovyi] for the international community.

At the same time, the Rada, with 217 votes, passed a resolution creating a Provisional Investigating Committee of the Verhovna Rada to verify the facts of military equipment supply to Georgia from Ukraine in breach of Ukrainian and international laws. [Note from UKL: it isn’t clear why a resolution failing to obtain the simple majority of 226 votes can be considered as having “passed”]

The Committee was instructed to study the circumstances of Ukrainian military equipment and ammunition supply to Georgian territory in order to determine whether it was done in violation of Ukrainian laws, whether abuse of authority had taken place and whether State Budget control rules were violated.

After this resolution was passed, the Speaker stroke off the resolutions proposed by Olena Lukash and Ivan Kyrylenko, that caused a storm of indignation from BYuT.

Mr. Yatsenyuk still placed the resolution by Kyrylenko for voting, but only 169 deputies voted in its favour.

Kyrylenko's project provided for Provisional Special Verkhovna Rada Committee to coordinate the action of all branches of state power concerning the settlement of the conflict in the Caucasus.

After voting Mr. Yatsenyuk denoted that the Parliament did not come to agreement due to its intricate internal political situation and to old habits by Ukrainian politicians to pay too much attention to external factors.

The debates on the Georgian issue in the Verkhovna Rada lasted seven hours.

#4

Viktor Yanukovich: Ukraine Must Support the Will of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia Peoples for Independence

Party of Regions Website, 26 August 2008

[translated by Vitaliy Voznyak for UKL]

Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states is a logical continuation of the process, which was started by western countries when these recognized the independence of Kosovo. Already in February of this year, I publicly expressed my concerns that such a step by the West will undeniably start a chain reaction. And we warned the world about the danger of resorting to double standards by recognizing Kosovo.

Kosovo's declaration of independence without Serbia's consent has for all practical purposes destroyed that order which has been established after Second World War vis-à-vis the inviolability of borders.

In Kosovo, the world has witnessed a grave precedent that lays grounds for the destruction of the 1975 agreements reached at the Helsinki Conference on the inviolability of state borders.

Only a few months have passed and the prediction has been shown true (emphasis in the original – UKL). What should be our position on Russia's recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, whose people have expressed their desire for independence? We have to act without double standards – we have to do as the West has done in regards to Kosovo's independence. I believe that Ukraine must accept the will of South Ossetia and Abkhazia's peoples and recognize their independence

#5

Declaration of the Presidium of the People's Union "Our Ukraine"

Nuns.com, 3 September 2008

[translated by Nykolai Bilaniuk for UKL]

"Our Ukraine" expresses its anger at the actions of the Bloc Yulia Tymoshenko which, having entered into a corridor compact with anti-Ukrainian forces, the Party of Regions and

Communists, has formed a new pro-Kremlin majority in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

Unfortunately, the multiple and public approaches by “Our Ukraine” to its partners in the coalition with a call to come to their senses and requesting to hold a meeting of the coalition council to deal with the BYuT positions, have received no reply.

Before the eyes of the entire nation, on September 2 began the execution of a scenario that is extremely dangerous and destabilizing to the situation in Ukraine. Having declined to condemn Russian aggression against Georgia and to support the territorial integrity of this country, BYuT together with the Communists and Regionals are not only consciously driving a wedge between Ukraine and the civilized world, but are creating the preconditions for a desire to call into question the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

In contravention of the accord creating the coalition of democratic forces and of the official position of “Our Ukraine,” the newly baked majority of BYuT, the Party of Regions and Communists voted in a whole collection of laws geared to removing from power the President of Ukraine who had been elected by the whole people, and transferring his authority to the anti-Ukrainian parliamentary oligarchy.

Having overcome the President's veto of the Law of Ukraine “Concerning temporary investigative commissions, special temporary investigative commission, and temporary special commissions of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine,” the Regionals, BYuT, and Communists opened the way to the impeachment of the head of state, and changes to a row of other laws arbitrarily limited the right of the president to indict decisions of the government.

Even more dangerous are the changes approved by the newly formed majority to the laws “Concerning the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine” and “Concerning the Security Service of Ukraine,” thanks to which the Bloc Tymoshenko, Party of Regions and Communists want, in contravention of the Constitution, to take away the president's ability to influence the appointment of the ministers of defence and foreign affairs, and also the head of the Security Service. According to the thinking of the conspirators, the leaders in these positions that are so key to the defence of the state and security of Ukraine are to be appointed by the new pro-Kremlin majority in the parliament.

In essence, before our eyes we see the birth of an anti-constitutional, anti-Ukrainian dictatorship of the prime minister.

“Nasha Ukraina” made a great effort to form the democratic coalition. Thanks to our voices under conditions of strong opposition Tymoshenko became prime minister, and a governing coalition was formed, and a number of definitive laws were passed.

In contrast to their unfair accusations and unpartnerlike actions, we made every effort to preserve the present coalition, not even considering the numerous and baseless violations of the coalition accord by the BYuT.

Regardless of serious differences in economic, humanitarian, foreign policy, and other questions,

we sought to save the democratic coalition at all costs.

However, by its present agreement the Bloc Yulia Tymoshenko has clearly embarked on the road to destroying the democratic coalition and has created a new anti-Ukrainian majority in concert with the Regionals and Communists.

The People's Union "Our Ukraine" considers that under such circumstances, our representatives in the government and in parliament cannot provide cover for participants in an antiukrainian conspiracy.

We support the decision of the bloc faction "Our Ukraine - National Self-Defence" concerning the departure from the coalition, and we believe that the full responsibility for the destruction of the coalition rests with BYuT.

At the same time "Nasha Ukraina" affirms its position that it is impossible for us to enter into a coalition with the Party of Regions and the Communists, and we declare our readiness to work as a parliamentary opposition.

We will defend Ukraine's statehood and democracy, and are convinced that in this quest we will be supported by millions of our countrymen.

#6

Tymoshenko's Address Concerning Events in the Verkhovna Rada
Ukrains'ka pravda, 3 September 2008
[translated by Nykolai Bilaniuk for UKL]

Esteemed fellow countrymen! Yesterday the "Nasha Ukraina" party unilaterally left the democratic coalition, and today the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko appeared with a special address to the people, in which he announced that half his fraction under his leadership achieved its aims and destroyed the democratic coalition.

As reason for this, two developments were cited. The first - my incorrect position with respect to the conflict in Georgia. The second - the formation of a coalition with the Party of Regions and the Communists.

My position with respect to the conflict in Georgia is concise, understandable, and unambiguous, and it fully agrees with the position of the European Union concerning the integrity and sovereignty of the territory of Georgia. My position is peaceful and doesn't allow for dragging Ukraine into any kind of military adventurism, and it will remain so in the future.

Concerning my coalition and a coalition of our political forces with the Party of Regions and Communists, I think that all people remember very well, that I did not sign a memorandum of friendship with the Party of Regions, that I did not sign with Yanukovich, the Communists, and Moroz the Universal on national unity, that I did not submit Yanukovich's candidacy for the prime ministership, nor did I form a grand coalition. In addition, I did not appoint to the post of National Security and Defense Council (RNBO) Secretary one of the leaders of the Party of

Regions Raisa Bohatyrova, and forming at the RNBO what amounts to a second government of Ukraine.

Therefore, if one is to speak about betrayal, one must have a good memory, and recall the recent history of Ukraine, or at least remind the President of his own biography. No matter from what angle we examine today's events, one thing is clear without any explanations.

Unfortunately, the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko has for a second time in one presidential term ruined and destroyed a democratic coalition, with it Ukraine's hope for a European choice and other positive hopes that the people have had. The first time was in 2005, when I tried to fight the total corruption in his entourage, and the second time is exactly today, when all the pro-president forces in the Presidential Secretariat were turned loose on the destruction of the democratic coalition in Ukraine.

I think you also followed events since the President began to destroy the democratic coalition and democratic government from literally the first day of their formation. Such pressure, such attack and aggression towards the government were something that I personally and my team never felt even during the post spirited activities by the opposition.

I kept silent all this time, and I know that you gave me a lot of credit for my silence. I even developed a special principle for myself - do everything you can that is good for the country, and do not pay attention to any intrigues.

I kept this stressed-out coalition together, I fought for it with the last of my strength, and kept it from crumbling with accords, guarantees, promises - everything that I could. But it was all for naught. President Yushchenko has been killing it consciously, enthusiastically, and consequentially.

However, despite all this, I believe the government has worked, is working, and I am convinced will continue to work in a normal fashion, uniting around itself all political forces, uniting all healthy politicians.

I would simply like to inform you that for the last 8 months we have maintained one of the highest growth rates among countries in general. I would like to inform you that we gathered a grain harvest twice as large as last year, and beat all records for grain harvests even compared to Soviet times, and have recovered our fame as the breadbasket of the world.

Thanks to our fight against corruption and shady dealings, the government has collected 32 billion additional hryvnia in revenue in support of the budget, and this is a significant part of the budget of Ukraine, money which can be given back to the people.

In Ukraine we built the first transit $\text{D}^{\frac{1}{4}}\text{D}^{\circ}\text{D}^3\tilde{\text{N}}-\tilde{\text{N}} \quad \tilde{\text{N}},\tilde{\text{N}}\text{E}^{\circ}\text{D}\text{E}\text{Kharkiv} - \text{Dnipropetrovske}$ according to European standards, and have begun to create for Ukraine a good image as a transit country.

In addition, we slowed and in the last two months brought to zero the record-high inflation that

we inherited - 17% per annum last year.

As leader of the government I can boast that in this year we will increase coal production in Ukraine by 4 million tons this year, while last year it had dropped by 5 million tons. We want to do everything necessary to return coal production to the levels that prevailed at the beginning of the 1990's, and those were serious records.

We twice raised the stipend for students, and increased workers' pay and pensions. Despite the President's great efforts to the contrary, the first tranche of savings was returned to six millions people, in the sum of one thousand hryvnia. The democratic government achieved more than I have enumerated, notwithstanding the fact that each one of our initiatives, each of our projects, met with such determined opposition from the head of state and his entourage, that we had to literally break through concrete walls and defeat barriers every day.

But do you know what is really unpleasant in this story? That the black deed of ruining the democratic coalition was covered by a mock patriotism, a spirituality in words only, and superficial morals. The truth, the reality why the president of the country Viktor Yushchenko declared a war of destruction on me personally and on the democratic team, is, unfortunately, a battle for supremacy in the next presidential elections in 2010.

Unfortunately, in order to achieve victory in those elections they were ready to go to the edge, although they have practically no chance of winning. They have been lost during this absolutely pointless battle.

However the presidential elections have so clouded these peoples' eyes and minds that they couldn't even register my assurances that I am prepared to step aside and once again support a sole candidate from the democratic coalition in the elections to the presidency, provided that we can achieve a normal harmonious work routine and provided they won't interfere with the work of the government. Surely these are not excessive demands? Is this not reasonable co-operation?

Today the president said that a dictatorship of the prime minister has been established in the country. Viktor Andrievych, we have no dictatorship in the democratic coalition headed by you with the unfortunate exception of a dictatorship of irresponsibility and disorder, which I tried very hard to stop yesterday in the voting that took place in the Verkhovna Rada.

First of all, I wanted to concisely distinguish between the authority of the government and the president, as is provided in the Constitution, and not have it such that the country has three governments and six prime ministers, and all of them rule but no one takes responsibility for what happens.

Secondly, by means of yesterday's vote in parliament, I wanted to distance your entourage from exercising influence over the Security Service, which today, unfortunately, has transformed itself into a repressive organ directed against politicians whom you consider your rivals. Further the Security Service is not performing its key function of defending the national interests of Ukraine and isn't doing everything to make Ukraine strong.

Dear countrymen, I understand that my response is not very happy, but despite this I truly know that everything will be well in our country. Ukraine is a strong country of wise, good people and we will undoubtedly enjoy success, regardless of all the political storms. I turn to my colleagues from the National Self-Defence and the Narodnyj Rukh of Ukraine, I turn to Yuri Lutsenko, to Borys Tarasiuk, to Anatoly Hrycenko and to all the other deputies of Our Ukraine - National Self-Defence, who by their votes categorically did not support the collapse of the democratic coalition.

I sincerely thank you for your political maturity, dignity and honour, and because you remained true to the democratic ideals and to fairness, and did not cave in to the provocations of the Presidential Secretariat and the immediate entourage and did not sign on to the announced exit from the democratic coalition.

Those who did sign on to the ruin of the democratic coalition should have taken action when the Presidential Secretariat and the President personally were engaged in ruining the democratic coalition, and not make such moves to destroy all that you and your president have left.

I turn to my colleagues and fellow warriors from Our Ukraine. It is not time to destroy the last democratic barricades, because the democratic coalition can and should exist. We have a whole ten days to calmly return into a democratic coalition, without ultimatums, without demands, and without provocations. None of the votes in parliament and no decisions on which your actions are based correspond exactly to reality, and ought not be a reason for leaving the coalition. If for eight months my team and I endured everything and did not allow ourselves to destroy the democratic coalition, then you too should value that coalition as highly as we value and strive to build it.

I sincerely count on the wisdom and balance of our colleagues in the democratic coalition. I believe that the work of the democratic coalition will be renewed.

Dear countrymen. I thank you for listening to me. You know, the situation in Ukraine is absolutely normal. The government continues to work regardless of the fact that the President instructed part of it to abandon work in the government. The government has a quorum, and the government is just as strong as it was before these completely unexpected events. We will not be stopped by any digressions and provocations. We are calm and assured. We have fully adequate forces and opportunities to carry out all our responsibilities, which we gave to all of you during the elections.

Literally tomorrow I will begin consultations with all political forces in parliament in order to create a system for consolidation, in order to finally put an end to the quarrels, so that in turn in parliament and in the government we can create a centre of stability. I am glad that today the parliament votes like a clock.

Yesterday we adopted without exception all the laws for the development of the coal industry. Today we adopted all decisions and changes to the budget, which have allowed us to raise the pay for budget, educational, medical, and cultural workers. This is a transition to a single rate system. Every day parliament and the government will adopt the decisions that you expect.

In addition, I believe that we have all been waiting for order to be restored to the judicial system and the system of local self government, so that we will have a clear division of powers in the country, so that the president won't be carrying out prime ministerial responsibilities, and the prime minister won't be excluded from all executive functions, so that we will never again have a situation, where somebody prevents the attendance of the heads of regional administrations at urgent consultations with the prime minister.

In order to achieve this, in order to strengthen the rights and freedoms of the people, in order to strengthen the principle of the rule of law, to demolish the monopoly on power structures and to consolidate the polity and create confidence in it, it is necessary to make constitutional changes.

Soon I will propose well grounded, absolutely thought out, and necessary constitutional changes for Ukraine. I believe that the new changes to the constitution will consolidate parliament, and all healthy forces.

I believe that the political sphere has already tormented the country enough with pre-term elections. We need to work, and not throw the country repeatedly into crisis. I want you all to know that you can count on me, that all principles and ideals that were concisely announced during our revolution, and which are accepted by the whole country regardless of party colours, they will be continued and carried forward to their logical conclusion. I am with you, as always. And I believe that you and we will see to it that all goes well despite problems and disagreements. Be confident of this.

The Ukrainian original of this text was taken from the website of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

#7

President Yushchenko's Address Concerning the Situation in the Verkhovna Rada
Ukrains'ka pravda, 3 September 2008
[translated by Nykolai Bilaniuk for UKL]

Esteemed fellow countrymen!

Yesterday events took place that have halted the functioning of the democratic coalition in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. There is but one reason for this in my opinion: a battle for power. Concerning your problems and needs, there is deafness. It is a cynical and cruel battle for power.

I want each of us to understand that what happened yesterday was not a routine event. What happened yesterday was not a simple technical vote.

I am convinced this is a pivotal moment. For each of us and for the country as a whole.

A new parliamentary coalition has been formed de facto in the Verkhovna Rada.

The Yulia Tymoshenko Block has united with the Party of Regions and the Communists. The

basis of this creation are interests that are not Ukrainian - I emphasize not Ukrainian - and contrary to state interests.

The democratic majority has been betrayed by this union.

Yesterday showed us all this exactly and clearly.

There can be no doubt that the collapse of the coalition was a well-planned event.

Every attempt by the "Our Ukraine - Peoples' Self-Defense" faction to carry out a meeting of the coalition council, to establish a common agenda for the day and a common position on the most sensitive questions of the moment, yesterday were rebuffed by the Yulia Tymoshenko Block.

The highest representative organ of the country and the democratic majority in particular were unable to offer a consensus opinion on the war in Georgia.

Deputies did not muster the maturity to respond to a question of the greatest weight for a nation - respect for the integrity of a sovereign state and the sacred unassailability of its borders.

This is a call to all of us. This is a humiliation for the Ukrainian people, because it is a devaluation of our integrity and our borders.

However, even this is not the most important thing that happened yesterday. Above all, yesterday in Parliament began a political and constitutional coup in Ukraine.

Anti-ukrainian and anti-state decisions were adopted.

By the hands of the Yulia Tymoshenko Block, the Party of Regions and the Communists, the unconstitutional law was reinstated which I want to remind you in 2007 provoked a parliamentary crisis and pre-term parliamentary elections.

This law establishes the dictatorship of the Prime Minister: the head of government is appointed in a manner inconsistent with the constitution, and the decrees of the President of Ukraine and the decisions of the National Security and Defense Council are completely ignored.

Changes to the law concerning the Constitutional Court make it impossible to challenge unconstitutional decisions of the government.

The government steps outside of any controls, and the elementary balance of government in Ukraine is ruined.

There had been many promises to cancel the immunity and priviledges of deputies. Everything has remained in place: a limitless pension, special services, VIP accomodations.

It turns out that even this is not enough. Yesterday the Yulia Tymoshenko Block, the Party of Regions and the Communists gave themselves the authority to act as prosecutors and judges.

They want to carry out an investigation, because today it wasn't enough to demand documents and question people. They want to hold people criminally responsible for refusing to give an explanation to a parliamentary deputy.

In addition, the deputies want to bring the National Security Service under their and the government's control.

I ask BYuT, the Communists, and the Party of Regions: Is this the key to the effectiveness of the Ukrainian government? This is your constructive co-operation? Is this what the Ukrainian people expect of you today? I am convinced it is not.

All these unconstitutional laws will be unconditionally vetoed by me.

Esteemed fellow countrymen!

For three years parliamentarians have been fighting for power in Ukraine.

In 2007 I initiated pre-term parliamentary elections in response to collusion and political corruption within the walls of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

Not only in words, but by concrete actions I steadily sought the unification of democratic forces in Ukraine. They were required to accept the responsibility of power - in parliament, and in the government.

As the head of state, I was particularly interested in a quick start to the work of the Rada and of the new Ukrainian government.

Because of this, on top of everything else, I twice proposed the appointment of Yulia Tymoshenko as prime minister of Ukraine.

I was guided not only by my personal will, but also by the wishes of millions of Ukrainians, who awaited effective and decisive actions, decisions by the coalition and by the Ukrainian government.

I would like to emphasize firmly: I protected the coalition and government from mistakes and miscalculations that occurred in their activities with unusual frequency and obviousness. Only a part of my observations were adequately received on personal or professional levels. In public - innocent eyes, behind the backs of the president and coalition partners - they pursue decisions based on narrow self-interest.

After eight months of effort, of the 245 laws that were foreseen under the accord by which the coalition was formed, only 41 bills were introduced. Of those, only 11 have been adopted by this time. Such is the effectiveness of the government and the ruling coalition. It was so, because the dominant interests were ones that very often remained behind the curtain.

The tendering centre was abolished only under pressure, and the new state procurement

procedures are being developed by the government up to the present time.

The laws on local government have not been changed. And these are sensitive laws which complete the system of national government. We are concerned here with the organs of self-government and local administration.

Laws concerning judicial reform and the battle against corruption have not been adopted. Six draft bills submitted by the president concerning these issues are waiting in parliamentary limbo for 9 months already.

No law has been adopted concerning the market for real estate. There is no consideration for the middle class and entrepreneurs.

The brakes have been applied to the reform of the Armed Forces. A budget has not been allocated for the formation of a contract army. Lack of funds became the reason for the latest cannonade at the artillery arsenal in the city of Lozov. Today the Ukrainian army receives financing in sums that is less, when inflation is factored in, than during an analogous period in preceding years. Is this an adequate approach by the government to the situation? I am deeply convinced that it is not.

By contrast, the leadership of the government has met its personal objectives.

Several attempts were made to circumvent the Ukrainian constitution and change the leadership of the State Property Fund.

Furthermore - the objective was banal, namely the sale of strategic objects in Ukraine in response to requests.

Instead of systemic reforms, there began a new reapportionment of property, and an absolutely populist disbursement of privileges, money, and very often also land.

I am sure that every Ukrainian has felt the consequences personally - we have the highest inflation rate in the region, in Europe. It now runs at 34% per annum. How can such a policy be justified? It can be explained by the completely unprofessional approach. Pure populism, for which the entire nation has to pay, without exception. However, those who suffer most are the people about whom politicians talk most often, and that is the poor. There is no more frightening tax than inflation, because it affects the interests of the powerless - not the millionaires, but the poorest people.

My demands that people be protected from inflation by means of changes to the state budget were ignored in March, May, and June. I am convinced that precisely changes to the state budget, including the introduction of a new minimum income and new social standards, would be an honest, adequate reaction of the government to the great inflation which has been provoked by that government in the first half of the year. But not such response has materialized.

Yesterday everything fell into place.

The Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc united with the Communists and the Party of Regions. I understand perfectly well, that this is an unnatural union. I understand perfectly well, that this union will not bring the country any blessings. This is a very familiar tactic. The previous coalition in parliament used it to seize power.

In my opinion this union has buried the democratic majority in the Ukrainian parliament.

Despite this, the situation is not hopeless. It is not long lasting.

Today citizens should see where lies the government interest, where lie the all-Ukrainian interests, and where are the politics of selling out, the politics of betrayal, the politics that do not include the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country, the indivisibility of its borders and the path towards European integration.

Today I would like to especially emphasize, and wish that my words reach every citizen of Ukraine: the government position will be maintained by me, regardless of any coalitions.

And one last thing. Esteemed fellow countrymen!

>From a legal standpoint I view the events in the Ukrainian parliament as a formal beginning to the formation of a new parliamentary coalition.

If during the time foreseen in the Fundamental Law of Ukraine, there will be no coalition formed among the fractions of deputies, I will exercise my power to dissolve the Verkhovna Rada and proclaim new elections.

Thank you for your attention.

#8

Excerpts from "Presse Kiev", a daily press monitoring from the French Embassy in Kyiv
4 September 2008
[translated by Dominique Arel for UKL]

Delo reports that "the President has provoked the Party of Regions and the Tymoshenko Bloc, who intend to raise the electoral threshold from 3% to 10%. The two blocs have found a way to prevent pro-presidential parties from being altogether represented in the Rada, in case of early elections. This is a barrier for Yushchenko," writes the daily. "According to these new rules, the chances of Our Ukraine and of the United Center [the Lytvyn Bloc] would be minimal, since their joint rating does not exceed 5%.

According to *Holos Ukrainy*, the decision to leave the coalition "comes into force after a delay of ten days." 5 Kanal quotes [Rada Speaker] Yatseniuk, according to whom "after ten days, the coalition ceases to exist." *Hazeta po-kievski* : "He gave her 30 days, she gave him only 10."

Hazeta 24. "The presidential ultimatum to the Rada frightened neither the Tymoshenko Bloc, nor

the Party of Regions. Early elections do not frighten them. Moreover, according to experts, a formal union is possible. The leader of these blocs may have already split the spoils : Tymoshenko stays as Prime Minister, Yanukovich becomes President. To eliminate Yushchenko from the Ukrainian political scene, and to leave two pro-Russian candidates, would be a dream for Moscow,” according to the daily.

Ukraina Moloda quotes L. Sliska, Vice-President of the Russian Duma [parliament]: according to him, “the activities of Tymoshenko are very reasonable, if she stays that reasonable in the future, she will become a good President.”

#9

Did I Cause a Split in the Party of Regions?
<http://blog.taraskuzio.net>, 1 September 2008

It is difficult to believe that asking a question, even if it was the first, at an informal luncheon would lead to such major political ramifications in a country 6,000 kilometres away.

At a US-Ukraine Business Council (USUBC) luncheon in Washington DC on Friday I asked the first question after a speech by National Security and Defense Council (NRBO) secretary Raisa Bohatiorova that praised the government’s economic record. The day before Bohatiorova had attacked the government during a private meeting at the Brookings Institution think tank attended largely by former US Ambassadors to Ukraine and the Baltic states.

In the USUBC luncheon I asked whether Bohatiorova supported President Yushchenko’s support for Georgia’s territorial integrity or Party of Regions leader Yanukovich support for South Ossetia and Abkhazia’s independence from Georgia. She answered that Yanukovich’s position was his own private viewpoint and that it did not reflect the party’s position, citing senior Party of Regions people who supported Georgia, such as the ‘intellectual brain’ of the party, Taras Chornovil. Bohatiorova stated her full support for Yushchenko’s actions in defense of Georgia’s territorial integrity.

Ariel Cohen of the Heritage Foundation asked Bohatiorova about her attitudes to Ukraine obtaining a NATO Membership Action Plan this year. Again, Bohatiorova’s opinion was at variance with that of Yanukovich and the Party of Regions, criticising them for supporting NATO when they were in power and opposed to NATO when they were in opposition. She strongly supported Ukraine receiving a NATO MAP in the aftermath of the Georgian crisis.

A day after returning to Ukraine from her six day US visit NRBO secretary Bohatiorova was expelled from the Party of Regions for her answers to Ariel’s and Kuzio’s questions on Georgia and NATO. Yanukovich must have been fuming: those present at the USUBC luncheon such as myself had read between the lines that she had little respect for him.

It is clear that of Ukraine’s three main parliamentary factions only Our Ukraine-Peoples Self Defense and BYuT have united positions in support of Georgia’s territorial integrity. Meanwhile, the Party of Regions is divided and incoherent in its stance towards Georgia and usually merely echoing Russia’s position.

The big question is if the expulsion of Bohatiorova is the beginning of a deep split in the Party of Regions between the anti-orange ideological wing led by Yanukovych that inherited many Communist Party voters and the so-called pragmatic wing to which Bohatiorova is aligned. Both Tymoshenko, through additional votes in eastern Ukraine from disillusioned Party of Regions voters, and Yushchenko, through Party of Regions defectors that may follow Bohatiorova who may join United Center, could gain from this crisis in the Party of Regions.

[Note from UKL: as item 3 indicates, on 2 September, 20% of MPs from the Party of Regions (35 of 175) did not vote in favor of Regions resolution recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Renat Akhmetov was absent from the vote]

#10

Party of Regions Splits over Georgia and NATO

by Taras Kuzio

Eurasia Daily Monitor, 2 September 2008

The Party of Regions expelled National Security and Defense Council (NRBO) Secretary Raisa Bohatryyova from the party's senior decision-making body, the Political Council, and from the party itself on September 1. Until being appointed NRBO secretary in December 2007, Bohatryyova had been the leader of the Regions parliamentary faction.

The surprise decision quickly followed Bohatryyova's support for Georgian territorial integrity and NATO membership during a luncheon held three days before at Washington's Metropolitan Club by the U.S.-Ukraine Business Council (USUBC). Bohatryyova was on an official visit to the United States from August 24 to 30.

Bohatryyova's remarks were in response to two questions posed by Jamestown and by Arieh Cohen of the Heritage Foundation. Asked whether she supported President Viktor Yushchenko's support for Georgia's territorial integrity or that of Regions leader Viktor Yanukovych in support of South Ossetian and Abkhaz independence, she answered that Yanukovych's position did not reflect the party's position and gave her strong support to Yushchenko.

Bohatryyova praised Yushchenko for attempting to unite politicians and Ukraine and criticized other political leaders for putting their personal interests above national ones. She added, "they frequently use foreign challenges for their party and electoral plans despite the risks of a threat to national security," an oblique reference to Yanukovych and his stance on NATO (Ukrainian News Agency, August 31).

Bohatryyova ridiculed Regions' official view on NATO as one that was in favor of NATO membership when the party was in power and against it when it was in opposition. She never raised the question of a referendum on NATO, a persistent Regions demand.

Citing the Kosovo precedent, Yanukovych has supported the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Two days after Bohatryyova's remarks the Crimean branch of Regions appealed to the parliamentary faction to do the same (www.partyofregions.org.ua, August 26;

www.prava.com.ua, August 28). The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZS) described Yanukovich's call as "harming the national interests of Ukraine," "provocative," "irresponsible," and "unpleasant" (www.mfa.gov.ua, August 29).

In a statement issued by the Regions faction, it did not support Yanukovich and the Crimean branch's call for Ukraine to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Instead, the statement blamed the authorities for not staying neutral and dragging Ukraine into the conflict by supporting Georgia and unleashing a "massive anti-Russian propaganda campaign" (www.rada.kiev.ua, August 26).

The Regions faction demanded a return to good relations with Russia, constitutional changes that would transform Ukraine into a non-bloc (neutral) country, and a referendum on NATO membership. Regions' call for the creation of a temporary parliamentary commission to investigate the delivery of weapons to Georgia and the participation of Ukrainians on the Georgian side echoed claims made by Russia about Ukraine's alleged involvement in the conflict.

Ukrainian politicians and the media have pointed out that arms deliveries to Georgia began under Presidents Leonid Kuchma and Eduard Shevardnadze, not under Yushchenko and Mikheil Saakashvili. Ukraine also supplied arms to Georgia during Yanukovich's government from 2002 to 2004.

Bohatryova's expulsion from Regions was propelled by Yanukovich's anger that she had belittled his position as leader. Bohatryova cited senior Regions leaders who condemned Russia's occupation of Georgian territory and said that Yanukovich's call for recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia was a "personal viewpoint" that did not reflect the collective leadership of the party.

Deputy Regions faction leader Oleksandr Yefremov disagreed, claiming that Yanukovich's position was the outcome of a "consolidated point of view of the Political Council of Regions. It was not the viewpoint of one person" (www.pravda.com.ua, September 1).

Asked during the USUBC luncheon whether she would be advising her U.S. contacts of Ukraine's support for a NATO MAP, she said, "There is a need to state loudly not only [its] importance but a rise of a threatening situation if a Membership Action Plan is not given to Ukraine" (www.pravda.com.ua, September 1). Bohatryova's backing for Yushchenko's strong support for a NATO MAP is at odds with Yanukovich's opposition to a MAP.

Since the crisis Ukrainian polls have shown a reversal of the downward trend in support for NATO membership that arose following the invasion of Iraq and anti-NATO media campaigns during Yanukovich's 2002-2004 government and the 2004 elections (www.pravda.com.ua, September 1). Support for NATO membership has risen back to a pre-Iraqi invasion level of one third, while opposition to it has declined.

Bohatryova stated unequivocally that the Black Sea Fleet would have to withdraw by 2017 and that the constitution forbade foreign bases, whether Russian or otherwise (a pointed reference to

NATO or American bases). Supporting Russia's stance, Regions has raised the question of extending the lease beyond 2017, even though this flatly contradicts Regions' support for Ukraine's neutrality, a status that rules out foreign bases.

Regions has split over the Georgian crisis and indirectly over NATO. Crimean Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU) leader Leonid Grach, an ally of the pro-Yanukovich faction in the Crimean parliament, has criticized Regions for its lack of a consolidated position on Georgia (Ukrainian News Agency, September 1).

Yanukovich's support for the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia is unpopular as support for the country's territorial integrity is as high in eastern as it is in western Ukraine. With many Ukrainians and Western observers looking to the Crimea as Russia's possible next target, the pro-independence stance of Yanukovich and Regions will be unpopular and will be used, as it already has been by the MZS, to question their patriotism (see *EDM*, August 12).

The Georgian conflict has exposed long simmering divisions in Regions between its virulent anti-orange ideological wing headed by Yanukovich, to which many former KPU voters defected, and a pragmatic wing dominated by big business with which Bohatyryova is aligned. The split may significantly harm Yanukovich's chances ahead of the January 2010 presidential elections and open up eastern Ukraine to further advances by the Yulia Tymoshenko bloc in the 2007 pre-term elections. Bohatyryova's expulsion from Regions could be followed by Regions defectors to the president's newly created United Center party (see *EDM*, July 28).

#11

Divided Nation is its Own Worst Enemy in Countering Russia

by David Marples

Kyiv Post, 3 September 2008

David Marples, who can be reached at drmarples@gmail.com, is a professor of Russian and East European history at the University of Alberta in Canada. This article is republished with the permission of the Edmonton Journal, Canada.

Yushchenko cannot lead Ukraine without public support as the country enters its 18th and most critical year of independence

Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent nations may signal the demise of Georgia. It also raises serious questions about future relations with Ukraine.

That threat cannot be dismissed as fanciful or farfetched as in the past. Russia's foreign policy in what it calls its "near abroad" has changed dramatically in the past month. Borders are no longer sacrosanct, and Russia has not hesitated to use its monopoly of gas supplies to Ukraine as a political weapon in the past. Ukraine is not blind to the new situation, but it is, in many respects, unprepared for the different forms of potential conflict.

The critical area is Crimea and, in particular, the port of Sevastopol. When Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko refused to extend the lease on the port to the Russian Black Sea fleet beyond

2017, he ignited a new conflict with the northern neighbor. Yushchenko has also demanded that the annual rent Russia pays for its two bases, \$98 million, be increased significantly.

Last month in Sevastopol, there was a substantial protest of ethnic Russian members of the Russian Bloc, the most powerful political party on the peninsula. Led by Vladimir Tyunin, they were demanding that Crimea become part of the Russian Federation.

That demand is hardly new. In the early 1990s, former Crimean president Yuri Meshkov ignited a similar movement and promised a referendum on the issue. The Ukrainian government acted firmly to quell the separatists and abolished the post of Crimean president.

Rumors abound that Russia is issuing passports to the majority group of ethnic Russians, just as it did to South Ossetians and Abkhazians in Georgia. Prominent Russian statespersons, including Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, frequently visit Sevastopol and demand that it be returned to Russia.

Added to the mix are the Crimean Tatars, deported by Josef Stalin in 1944-45, but permitted to return under Gorbachev and now comprising about onesixth of the population. The relationship between the Tatars and the government in Kyiv is amicable, but relations with Russians who own most of the former Tatar lands and property are volatile.

In 2004, when the Orange Revolution took place, eventually bringing Yushchenko into office, two regions of Ukraine – Donetsk and Luhansk – threatened to leave Ukraine with support from Russia. The two regions, centers of the coal, steel and chemicals industries, provided overwhelming support to the candidacy of former prime minister Viktor Yanukovich. They have large populations of ethnic Russians comprising majorities in the major cities.

Since the population as a whole is Russian speaking, there is no ethnic tension. But the Regions Party, which dominates eastern Ukraine, has a radically different perception of the country than the Orange parties currently in office. It is backed by Ukraine's richest and most powerful oligarch, Rinat Akhmetov, and supports warm relations with Russia and close ties with the European Union, while strongly opposing Ukraine's request to join NATO and Yushchenko's support for Georgia.

After Russia's brutal defeat of Georgian forces, both Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko visited the Donbas (to Donetsk and Luhansk respectively). They were not coordinated visits, but the timing seemed notable. Both leaders wished to ensure that they have a voice in a formerly hostile voting area.

Today, the key issue is the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and President Dmitry Medvedev have indicated that they are prepared to revise formerly recognized borders. The Russian government is willing to support and sow disaffection in eastern Ukraine and Crimea, as well as in the Prydnistrova region of Moldova.

However, Ukraine tends to be its own worst enemy. Though its government has requested NATO membership, most residents oppose it. The Regions Party insists that no membership can

take place without a referendum, the result of which hitherto has been a foregone conclusion.

Despite two recent elections, the Ukrainian parliament is so badly divided that it could not even pass the 2008 budget before the summer recess. Yushchenko has undermined every reform initiative of Tymoshenko. In turn, the ruling Orange coalition's majority is down to two seats.

Perhaps most revealing of Ukraine's predicament is the low standing in the polls of the president and his party. A poll conducted between Aug. 8 and 24 found that, had a parliamentary election been held at that time, 23.4 percent of respondents would have backed the Tymoshenko Bloc and 20.3 per cent the Regions Party. Yushchenko's Our Ukraine and People's SelfDefense Coalition and the Communists had 4.6 percent.

In terms of the popularity of the potential presidential candidates for the 2010 election, Tymoshenko leads with 24 per cent, followed by Yanukovych with 20. Yushchenko's 7 percent makes him the least popular leader in Europe at a time when Ukraine's economy is as strong as it has ever been.

Ukraine's politicians need to focus on priorities. A coalition government to ensure internal unity seems to be a logical first step. Yushchenko cannot lead Ukraine without public support as the country enters its 18th and most critical year of independence.

#12

Alarm Bells in Ukraine

by Steven Eke

Russian affairs analyst

BBC, 3 September 2008

The British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, has travelled to Ukraine to discuss what he termed "a coalition against Russian aggression".

Meanwhile, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner has warned that Moscow may indeed set its sights on Ukraine - a situation he described as "very dangerous".

Ukraine's leadership currently pursues pro-Western policies.

President Viktor Yushchenko and Foreign Minister Volodymyr Ohryzko are both committed to Ukraine's eventual integration into western institutions, including Nato and the European Union.

Neither organisation has so far provided a "road map" to membership, any realistic prospect of Ukraine joining may be many years away.

This, along with the divisions entrenched in Ukrainian society and politics, are factors Moscow will try to use to its advantage in the fight for influence over Ukraine with the West.

Fractious parliament

Mr Miliband might be aware that opinion polls before the recent conflict suggested that as many as two-thirds of Ukrainians are either opposed to Nato membership, or have no fixed opinion. Attitudes to the European Union are much more positive.

President Yushchenko's popularity is at rock bottom. Opinion polls give him extremely low, single-digit levels of support. His chances of re-election in the next presidential vote are very slim.

Forging a coalition with such a weak leader, in a country with such a fractious parliament, could be difficult. Even more so when the other key figures - especially Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko - have been decidedly ambiguous over the Russia-Georgia dispute.

Mr Yushchenko has criticised Ms Tymoshenko's silence, with his allies even suggesting she was a "traitor" working for Russia's interests. Her position is likely to be based on the pragmatism for which she is known. She could not launch a bid for the presidency next year (and she is likely to do so) on an anti-Russian ticket.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian opposition leader, Viktor Yanukovich, has warned that Ukraine must not be drawn into disputes between Russia and third countries.

Naval fleet

>From the Russian perspective, the issues are more clear-cut. Firstly, Russia will not countenance any further expansion eastwards of Nato. Some Russian politicians have even suggested restoring Russian influence in the Caucasus could serve as a model for Ukraine - which matters much more than Georgia.

Russia has a powerful tool at its disposal, namely the large ethnic Russian population in Crimea - also, significantly, the home of Russia's Black Sea naval fleet. Mr Yushchenko has restricted fleet operations, and suggested Russia should pay more for its presence. He also insists it must leave when an inter-state treaty expires in 2017.

>From Russia, there are regular calls for the annexation of Crimea, which was transferred from Russian to Ukrainian jurisdiction by the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, in 1954. Russian separatism in Crimea appeared to have waned by the mid-1990s. But recently there have been consistent attempts to resuscitate it.

Reports suggest that over recent years, Russia has quietly issued many of the ethnic Russians in Crimea - legally citizens of Ukraine - with Russian passports. In Moscow's view, this makes them Russian citizens, and gives Russia the right to act to defend them. This was precisely the policy adopted towards South Ossetia and Abkhazia - separatist regions internationally recognised as parts of Georgia, but whose populations are described by Moscow as its own.

Alarm bells

Inflating the concept and definition of citizenship in this way opens the way to serious

consequences. No-one is seriously forecasting armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine. But the mere notion sets alarm bells ringing. After all, well over 20 million Russians currently live outside the borders of the Russian Federation.

In some countries they form a significant minority of the population. Russia's government began to enunciate this policy some year ago, but it drew little attention in the West. No-one is seriously forecasting armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine. But the mere notion sets alarm bells ringing. In the West, because Ukraine is the major transit route for Russian oil and has en route to markets in central and western Europe. And, in Ukraine itself, it is encouraging an important rethink of national defence strategy and military doctrine.

Constitutionally, Ukraine is a neutral country, one that voluntarily gave up nuclear weapons and that has pledged never to host NATO bases. Nonetheless, leaks from the Ukrainian defence ministry suggest the country plans to bolster air defence systems in Crimea and the eastern regions bordering Russia. Fighters currently deployed in other regions are likely to be moved to the Crimea. Large increases in spending on defence are expected to be announced as early as September.

#13

Ukraine Can Avoid Georgia's Missteps
by Roman Kupchinsky
Kyiv Post, 3 September 2008

Roman Kupchinsky is a partner in AZEast Group, a political risk consultancy based in the United States. He can be contacted at Kupchinsky@AZEast.com

As the August drums of war beat in the Caucasus and the western alliance watched haplessly as columns of Russian tanks lumbered into a tiny mountainous country, politicians in Kyiv were busy devising a haphazard response to this act of Russian aggression.

The RussianGeorgian war became the perfect opportunity for Ukraine's embattled president, Victor Yushchenko, to kill two birds with one stone. The first was to draw attention to what he believed was the West's historical error during the NATO summit in Bucharest by not granting Ukraine and Georgia the Membership Action Plan they needed for a future place in NATO. The second was to continue his fullcourt press on discrediting the government of Yulia Tymoshenko. Which goal took priority is difficult to say with any certainty.

The Ukrainian leadership knew full well that its options were severely limited. To dispatch Ukrainian armed forces to fight alongside its unofficial Georgian allies was immediately ruled out of the question. A hasty statement threatening to prevent warships from the Russian Black Sea Fleet to return to their base in Sevastopol until the conflict was settled was seen as a bad joke by the Russian military command. It was so bad that two weeks later the Ukrainian side was forced to admit that it "had no conflict with Russia" and rescinded its "threat."

Ukrainian support for Georgia was symbolized by Yushchenko grandstanding in Tbilisi, alongside Georgia's President Mikheil Saakashvili, while his administration issued statements

that Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, by keeping silent on the Georgian issue, was nothing less than a traitor. Tymoshenko, according to the dubious Yushchenko scenario, was selling herself to Moscow allegedly to win the Kremlin's support in her future bid for president.

Yushchenko's main show of support for Georgia, once boiled down to its essence, was to declare war on Yulia Tymoshenko.

Only poorly informed optimists expected Western armed forces to come to Georgia's aid in its war with Russia. And while most Western governments properly condemned Russian behavior, nobody in his or her right mind could understand why Saakashvili chose to knowingly subject his country to such punishment by sending Georgian tanks into South Ossetia. The Russian response was evident and most likely premeditated. A wiser leader would have taken measures to prevent such a tragedy.

Instead of moderation, the Georgians opted for confrontation and lost. Their Ukrainian "allies" proved to be fair weather friends – big on words but incapable of deeds.

And while the Georgians might have been provoked by Moscow to go to war, this does not absolve them of irrational behavior. National suicide is not the best method of defending a country's independence.

Many observers were quick to point out that had Georgia been a member of NATO, the alliance would have been obligated to come to the country's defense and, by doing so, precipitating a war with Russia. Others, however, believe that membership in NATO would have prevented a Russian invasion. This debate will, no doubt, continue for years to come. Ukrainian political analysts should follow this debate carefully.

Will Ukraine become the next victim of Russian aggression?

The prevalent speculation in Ukraine and in the West is that "liberating" the Crimean Peninsula's Russian population will be the next pretext for Russia to expand its grip on the postSoviet space and gobble up Ukraine.

It is a scenario which needs to be carefully examined since it is feasible, but not probable, in the short run. The factors that should be considered are:

Ukraine will not become a member of NATO in the foreseeable future and therefore cannot count on Western military support. Ukraine is not Georgia and any provocation aimed against Ukraine will be seen as a direct threat to the West. By the same token, the West will be hard-pressed to prevent any Russian move aimed at limiting Ukraine's independence. Western security guarantees for Ukrainian territorial integrity are not likely to be concluded and will remain merely soothing phrases.

Ukraine might be forced to cut off Russian gas supplies to Europe as a weapon of last resort to force the Europeans to come to their assistance. This, in turn, would most likely evoke a harsh Russian response and could lead to an allout war.

The Ukrainian military is not prepared or equipped to win a war against Russia.

If Russia were to “play the Crimean card,” it would require an occupation of the peninsula to be successful. The prospects of this succeeding are slim at best, given that Crimea depends on Ukraine almost totally for its fresh water supplies. By turning off the spigots, the Crimeans could be brought to their knees within days.

Ukrainian leaders must remain pragmatic and concentrate their efforts on consolidating the economic and diplomatic gains they have made over the past 17 years. Kyiv's proGeorgian and antiRussian flag waving is not likely to produce any meaningful results. Offers to lease radar stations to NATO members on Ukrainian territory is no guarantee that, in case of war, NATO will rush in to defend the owners of the lease.

The era of romantic Ukrainian nationalism should be remembered and revered, but past heroism cannot be the basis for a modern foreign policy. The days of the Ukrainian Partisan Army (UPA) are over. The tragedy of the Great Famine should be solemnly commemorated and not used to provoke endless fights with Russia.

Ukraine should abandon its futile tactic of trying to equate the famine – holodomor, or murder by famine – with the Jewish holocaust by outlawing “holod deniers,” getting the United Nations to pass resolutions declaring the famine “genocide,” and other such impractical initiatives. They will not generate public sympathy for Ukraine, which will somehow translate into support for Ukrainian policy goals or speed up Ukraine’s Atlantic integration.

Last but not least, the president of Ukraine should abandon his closest policy advisers and come to grips with reality. If the prime minister is indeed a “traitor,” she should be fired on the spot. If a “kitchen cabinet” is whispering in Yushchenko’s ear to make virulent nationalism state policy, then this lobby should be dispersed.

#14

New Book

Sarah D. Phillips

Women's Social Activism in the New Ukraine:
Development and the Politics of Differentiation
Bloomington: Indiana University Press
Series: New Anthropologies of Europe
ISBN-13: 978-0-253-21992-3

In postsocialist Ukraine, with privatization and the scaling back of the social safety net, it is primarily women who have been left as leaders of service-oriented NGOs and mutual aid associations, caring for the marginalized and destitute with little or no support from the Ukrainian state. Sarah D. Phillips follows 11 activists over the course of several years to document the unexpected effects that social activism has produced for women: increasing social inequality and "differentiation" in the form of new cultural criteria for productive citizenship and new definitions of the rights and needs of various categories of citizens.

Sarah D. Phillips is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Indiana University.

#15

New Book

Peter W. Rodgers

Nation, Region and History in Post-Communist Transitions:
Identity Politics in Ukraine 1991-2006
(Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics & Society, Vol. 80).
Edited by Andreas Umland

Published by ibidem Publishers Stuttgart, <http://www.ibidem-verlag.de/>.
ISBN 978-3-89821-903-7 Paperback, Pages 195, Price 24.90 Euro [Germany]

Since independence in 1991, issues of nation and identity have become highly debated topics in Ukraine. This monograph explores not only how national identity is being (re)constructed by the Ukrainian state, but also the processes by which it is negotiated through society. The central argument of this work is that too much attention, concerning identity in Ukraine, has focused on markers of ethnicity and language. Instead, the author advocates a regional approach, engaging with the issue of how Ukraine's regional differences affect nation-building processes.

Following the tumultuous events of the 'Orange Revolution', the view of Ukraine as a country inherently 'divided' between 'East' and 'West' has (re)emerged to become a popular explanation for political events. The study outlines the necessity for academics, policymakers and indeed politicians to veer away from this simplistic 'West versus East' divide. The book advocates an analysis of Ukraine's unique brand of regionalism not in terms of divisions, but in terms of regional differences and diversity.

The author deconstructs the concept of 'Eastern Ukraine' by focusing on three Ukrainian localities, all adjacent to the Ukrainian-Russian border. The study examines how individuals provide 'their' own understanding of the place of their region within the wider processes of nation building across Ukraine. In doing so, the book develops a 'regional' approach to the study of identity politics in Ukraine.

#16

New Book

Kaleidoscopic Odessa: History and Place in Contemporary Ukraine
Anthropological Horizons

Tanya Richardson—University of Toronto Press

—Cloth: Aug 21 2008 Active/Available—Paper: Aug 2 2008 Active/Available—World Rights—240pp /11 illustrations

The recent tumult of Ukraine's Orange Revolution and its aftermath has exposed some of the deep political, social, and cultural divisions that run through the former Soviet republic.

Examining Odessa, the Black Sea port that was once the Russian Empire's southern window onto Europe, *Kaleidoscopic Odessa* provides an ethnographic portrait of these overlapping divisions in a city where many residents consider themselves separate and distinct from Ukraine.

Exploring the tensions between local and national identities in a post-Soviet setting from the point of view of everyday life, Tanya Richardson argues that Odessans's sense of distinctiveness is both unique and typical of borderland countries such as Ukraine.

Kaleidoscopic Odessa provides a detailed account of how local conceptions of imperial cosmopolitanism shaped the city's identity in a newly formed state. Richardson draws on her participation in history lessons, markets, and walking groups to produce an exemplary study of urban ethnography.

Ethnographically sophisticated and methodologically innovative, *Kaleidoscopic Odessa* will interest anthropologists, Slavists, sociologists, historians, and scholars of urban studies.

Tanya Richardson is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at Wilfrid Laurier University.

#17

New Book

Eurasia Rising Democracy and Independence in the Post-Soviet Space
Georgeta Pourchot

Book Code: C9916

ISBN: 0-275-99916-5

ISBN-13: 978-0-275-99916-2

DOI: 10.1336/0275999165

192 pages

Praeger Security International

Publication Date: 7/30/2008

List Price: \$75.00 (UK Sterling Price: £41.95)

Description: Although the score of countries comprising Russia's "near abroad" (the former non-Russian Soviet republics) and "far abroad" (the former non-Russian Warsaw Pact states) are behaving with variably increasing independence in their domestic and foreign policies, Russia continues to regard them as remaining within the same core-periphery sphere of influence formerly exerted by the Soviet Union within the same geographic space. Russia misinterprets bids by these countries to adopt liberalizing structural reforms and to join Euro-Atlantic organizations as foreign-inspired and inimical to Russia's security. Whether Russia can learn to recognize that such bids are in fact natural developments of national self-interest will determine whether healthy and mutually beneficial bilateral relations can develop between Russia and the states of her near and far abroad in the 21st century. No previous study of the dynamics of post-Soviet assertive sovereignty has as broad a geographic scope as *Eurasia Rising*, which considers

the whole of Post-Soviet Space: Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine _ Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia

Georgeta Pourchot is Senior Associate at CSIS, Washington, DC

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