2010-02

The ISCIP Analyst, Volume XVI, Issue 9

Cavan, Susan

Boston University Center for the Study of Conflict, Ideology, and Policy

http://hdl.handle.net/2144/11877

Boston University
NEWLY INDEPENDENT STATES: CAUCASUS

By Robyn Angley

GEORGIA

Misreading the Rose Revolution: The flaws in Georgia’s radical opposition

The success of the National Movement and its allies, the erstwhile Burjanadze Democrats, in implementing the Rose Revolution in 2003, established a model for Georgia’s radical opposition parties to follow in future attempts to confront the government. The impact of this model is evident, not in the rhetoric of opposition politicians, but in their consistent attempts to duplicate the steps taken by Mikheil Saakashvili’s National Movement and its allies before and during the 2003 parliamentary election period. Georgia’s extra-parliamentary opposition parties pursue senior level, directly elected local-government positions in Tbilisi, engage in repeated, but failed, attempts to form an opposition alliance, hold mass demonstrations calling for Saakashvili’s resignation, and seek to establish independent or opposition oriented media outlets.

There are more opposition parties now than there were even two years ago; the August 2008 war with Russia over South Ossetia sparked the emergence of new opposition parties headed by former Saakashvili allies. Among these erstwhile partners are former Speaker of Parliament Nino Burjanadze, former Georgian Ambassador to the United Nations Irakli Alasania, and the overtly pro-Russian former Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Noghaideli, whose party recently signed an agreement with Russia’s ruling party, United Russia. (1)

The most recent example of the Rose Revolution model’s impact on Georgia’s radical opposition is the competition over the upcoming mayoral election in Tbilisi, scheduled for 30 May. The contest for the capital’s mayoralty is fierce. It is
commonly assumed that the ruling party will field incumbent mayor Gigi Ugulava as its candidate. Ugulava is a former civic activist who entered the government after playing an active role in preparations for the Rose Revolution, as its candidate. Georgia’s extra-parliamentary opposition parties have begun negotiations to hold a primary, in order to select a single opposition candidate, thereby strengthening their chances of victory.

It is indicative of the high degree to which politics in Georgia revolves around personalities, rather than political platforms, that so many of the ideologically diverse extra-parliamentary opposition parties are willing to cooperate for the sake of challenging the United National Movement’s (President Saakashvili’s party) hold on Georgian politics. Many of the opposition attempts to confront the ruling party have relied on Rose Revolution-like tactics. While some of these efforts reflect a good analysis of the components that made Georgia’s Revolution successful, there are several elements that the opposition has failed to take into account. These missed lessons from Shevardnadze’s ouster reflect the differences between Georgia in 2003 and 2010 and indicate that, if contingent on purely domestic factors, the current opposition may find it difficult to recreate the successes of the Rose Revolution and remove the president from his post.

**Lessons learned**

The model established by National Movement’s approach to the 2003 elections included building support, particularly in Tbilisi, by a solid performance in local elections. Before the revolution, Saakashvili’s party had performed well in the 2002 local elections and made a deal with the Labor Party that offered Saakashvili the position of chairman of the Tbilisi Sakrebulo (City Council). Since the capital’s mayoral post was an appointed office, the Sakrebulo chairmanship was the highest-ranking popularly elected position that Saakashvili could claim in the Tbilisi local government. Saakashvili used the post to build support for his party in the capital, implementing popular projects and receiving considerable news coverage from Rustavi 2, which was, at the time, Georgia’s dominant
opposition television station (it has since become a mouthpiece for the Saakashvili administration). National Movement’s success in the 2002 local election illustrated the importance of building support in small, but effective steps, and taking particular care to compete for positions that would guarantee an effective public spotlight for one’s party. Georgia’s current opposition groups are seeking to imitate National Movement’s success in the local election by avidly pursuing the Tbilisi mayoralty, now the highest popularly elected position in the capital.

A particularly effective component of the Rose Revolution was the formation of alliances between opposition parties. Though failing to unite before the election took place, National Movement and the Burjanadze Democrats (an opposition party led by two former speakers of parliament, Nino Burjanadze and Zurab Zhvania) joined forces after election day in order to defend their vote. This alliance proved unexpectedly strong, particularly given previous failed opposition attempts to form a united front.

Georgia’s current pantheon of opposition parties has sought repeatedly to form some sort of united alliance. Most notably, a “united” group of opposition parties that included, at times, up to ten political entities, held mass rallies on 7 November 2007, prompting a government crackdown and the scheduling of early presidential elections for January 2008. That same “united” opposition fielded Levan Gachechiladze as a presidential candidate in the 2008 elections. Most recently, some of Georgia’s opposition parties have discussed holding primaries to select a joint candidate for the upcoming mayoral elections, though the parties involved in the “united” opposition vary from day to day.

A third element that had great impact during the Rose Revolution was the use of large-scale public demonstrations to force the government to accept an extra-constitutional transfer of power. These constant, well-attended demonstrations on the steps of major government buildings were very effective in maintaining
public pressure on the government in order to extract concessions and proved to be an important component of the opposition’s success in the Rose Revolution. Over the past two years, opposition parties also have held many mass rallies to protest the Saakashvili government, the most notable of which were 7 November 2007, when the government dispersed protesters by force, and 9 April 2009, which marked the twentieth anniversary of the 9 April 1989 massacre of peaceful Georgian protesters by Soviet troops.

Finally, Rustavi 2 provided a vital outlet for independent media reports, which served to support the opposition during the 2003 parliamentary campaign and post-election developments. During the Rose Revolution, Rustavi 2 provided a necessary counterpoint to the government-controlled television stations.

Georgia’s post-revolution opposition leaders relied briefly on the Imedi television station to fill the role of independent media outlet in 2007, until government intervention forced the station to close. Similar efforts have been made to establish new independent television stations, although so far these new media outlets have had less impact than Rustavi 2 carried in 2003 or Imedi achieved in 2007.

**Lessons missed**

While victories in local elections, a strong opposition alliance, the use of popular demonstrations, and an independent media outlet all contributed to the success of the Rose Revolution, they were not sufficient to bring it about. There are several lessons the current opposition has failed to draw from Saakashvili’s past success; these overlooked factors help to explain the failure of Georgia’s radical opposition to duplicate the success of Saakashvili and his revolutionary allies.

First, National Movement and the Burjanadze Democrats shared a broadly similar orientation and political platform – they were both strongly Western-oriented and in favor of implementing democratic reforms. The two parties were
by no means identical; however, their major differences were not over what should be done, but the sequence in which it should be carried out. National Movement advocated the immediate implementation of reforms, while the Burjanadze Democrats preferred to execute reforms in gradual stages. The broad similarities between the two groups increased the prospects that their partnership would outlast the immediate demands of the post-election scenario.

Many of Georgia’s current opposition parties have very little in common. Their major point of agreement is dissatisfaction with the Saakashvili regime, and they have made little effort to reach agreement on what steps they would take should a “united” opposition candidate be elected. Thus, the current opposition parties lack a clear, let alone unified, vision that reaches beyond the ouster of Saakashvili and this makes them an uncertain choice for the electorate.

Another missed lesson is the extent to which Nino Burjanadze and Zurab Zhvania, Saakashvili’s allies in the Rose Revolution, were willing to acknowledge his right to lead. A decisive victory at the polls for National Movement, even though unacknowledged by the official election results, which were manipulated by the Shevardnadze government, contributed to Saakashvili’s right to claim leadership of the forces challenging the government. Georgia’s current opposition groups lack a truly legitimate leader. Instead, politicians from the various opposition groups currently face few incentives to surrender their own political ambitions in order to boost “opposition” goals. Other than Levan Gachechiladze, who won strong support in Tbilisi during the 2008 elections, none of the opposition politicians has performed strongly in recent elections. Even Gachechiladze’s popular support has declined because of the ineffective mass protests he led in April 2009. The absence of an acknowledged dominant opposition leader is unlikely to change before the upcoming mayoral contest; the stakes in the local election are not large enough to force the opposition to unite in advance. Although granting access to certain state resources in the capital and a public spotlight, the mayoral post will not include the same opportunities for
patronage or increased party influence that reward the victors of parliamentary or presidential elections, and which therefore might induce opposition unity, for the sake of gaining access to those larger government benefits.

A key factor in the success of any opposition movement is the level of support enjoyed by the sitting government. By 2003, the Shevardnadze government was immensely unpopular, which meant that the “revolutionaries” were initially acting with broad support from a majority of the population. In September 2003, just two months before the Rose Revolution, only 5% of Georgia’s population believed the country to be developing in the right direction, an assessment that was reflective of the Shevardnadze administration’s failure to implement reforms. (2) The Rose Revolution protests, at their peak, included a relatively small portion of the population compared with the whole - around 100,000 participants, representing less than 3% of the total Georgian population of 4.3 million in 2003 or about 10% of Tbilisi’s population of around 1 million (3). However, Saakashvili’s overwhelming electoral success (96% of the vote) in the relatively clean presidential election that followed Shevardnadze’s resignation confirmed that the National Movement leader had high levels of support even among Georgians who had not participated in the demonstrations. (4)

Georgia’s current opposition has not had the benefit of a severe decline in the president’s popularity. Though Mikheil Saakashvili’s approval ratings did fall after Russia’ invasion of South Ossetia in August 2008, they never sank to the consistently low levels of support experienced by Eduard Shevardnadze during his second term. This lack of large-scale popular opposition to Saakashvili, particularly outside the capital, weakens the radical opposition’s chances of implementing a Rose Revolution-like scenario against the current president.

Yet another overlooked element in the Rose Revolution is the extent to which the opposition parties in 2003 reinforced the pro-Western inclinations present in Georgian society. At the time, National Movement and the Burjanadze
Democrats evinced a more strongly pro-Western orientation than President Shevardnadze was able to project. In contrast, Georgia’s current opposition parties seem to be gravitating towards Moscow, perhaps to contrast with the mutual animosity between Saakashvili and the Kremlin. However, a pro-Russian stance is not favored among Georgians, who resent Russia’s actions, most recently in the 2008 conflict.

Finally, the triumvirate of opposition leaders who challenged the Shevardnadze regime in 2003 had a suitable occasion in which to pursue their aims – the parliamentary elections. Domestic NGOs provided evidence of fraud, giving opposition parties support for their claims that the Shevardnadze government had compromised the democratic process. Georgia’s current opposition parties have not been able to find a similarly significant watershed event on which to capitalize in challenging the Saakashvili government or to provide adequate evidence to back up their grievances and recruit popular support.

**Conclusion**

While opposition leaders have shown a marked inclination to duplicate the Rose Revolution model in Georgia, their current chances of success, if evaluated based on purely domestic factors, are low. They lack adequate support in Georgia, particularly outside Tbilisi. The absence of a concrete, well-articulated platform does not inspire trust in opposition politicians. Their failure to make a concerted effort thus far to enter politics by legitimate democratic means (during the last parliamentary election, the few radical opposition candidates who had been elected for the new legislature refused to participate) has weakened their credibility, making it appear that they care more about attacking the regime than helping to govern the country in a credible way.

Despite the lack of domestic support for opposition parties, there are conditions under which a “revolutionary” scenario could be implemented in Georgia. In the current environment, however, this development likely would involve a shift
toward Russia rather than a step closer to the West, as the Rose Revolution was. The recent trend of Georgian opposition leaders holding discussions with Russian government officials and, in the case of former Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Noghaideli, signing agreements with Russia’s ruling party, means that attempts to unseat the sitting government could receive assistance from Moscow. Russian support would have a significant impact on developments in Georgia, if, for example, after the mayoral elections, Noghaideli—Russia’s current favorite—led an attempt to duplicate the “revolutionary scenario,” claiming that the government had tampered with the election results. The extent to which this effort would succeed, however, depends on the nature of Moscow’s “assistance” to such an endeavor. Noghaideli’s Russian backing is not popular among Georgians. Should Moscow intervene merely via diplomatic means or public statements, it would have little impact and the attempt to provoke regime change would receive little popular support. If, however, Moscow were to intervene militarily, using a pretext similar to that used to justify invading Georgia during the Bolshevik civil war (i.e., an invitation from a small clique of pro-Russian Georgian leaders), then extra-constitutional regime change championed by some of Georgia’s radical opposition could take place, despite its lack of popular support. In that case, the opposition leaders would most likely become a puppet government controlled by Moscow.

The Rose Revolution continued the precedent of extra-constitutional transfers of executive power that was established by the removal of Georgia’s first president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, in a violent coup in 1992. The best scenario for Georgia now, assuming its political development is free from external interference, would be to succeed in carrying out a peaceful, legitimate, constitutional transfer of power when Saakashvili’s term ends in 2013. If Georgia’s opposition politicians care about the country more than their own political ambitions, they will wait until that time to confront Saakashvili in a way that reinforces Georgia’s tentative progress toward democratic governance.
Newly Independent States: Central Asia

By Monika Shepherd

KYRGYZSTAN

Russia puts brakes on Kyrgyzstan’s hydropower plans

The Kyrgyz government’s grand plans for attaining self-sufficiency in energy by focusing on the further development of its hydropower industry may have hit a new roadblock, as Russian Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko has suddenly become concerned by the Kambar-Ata hydropower facilities’ possible environmental impact. At a press conference following the most recent session of the Russian-Kyrgyz Intergovernmental Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation, Shmatko stated that “in view of a current debate on the safety of putting the project into effect and its significance for Central Asia,” he and Kyrgyz Prime Minister Daniyar Usyonov had discussed the need for an international study to examine the possible risks posed by the construction of the Kambar-Ata hydropower facilities. Prime Minister Usyonov told reporters that he and Shmatko also talked about asking the World Bank to undertake such a study:
“We have discussed plans to have the World Bank carry out the study. This would help normalize the situation around the project and make it more transparent and safe for investors.” (1)

Thus far, the project has only two investors, Russia’s Inter RAO UES and Kyrgyzstan’s Electric Stations, (2) both of which have had over a year to raise any concerns they might have regarding the Kambar-Ata project’s safety. The timing of the latest snag in the project’s completion, therefore, seems a bit curious. Neither company’s executives have publicly voiced any misgivings about the hydropower plant’s safety or environmental risks. So far, the project’s most vocal opponent has been the Uzbek government, which views all plans for new hydropower installations by its Kyrgyz and Tajik neighbors as a threat to its own water supply. Tashkent’s fears are not without precedent – during the summer of 2008, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan experienced water shortages, due to low water volumes in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan’s main reservoirs. This situation ensued after a particularly harsh winter, during which those two countries were forced to release higher than normal water volumes from their reservoirs to generate electricity. Since the winter of 2007/2008, both Dushanbe and Bishkek have imposed strict electricity rationing from late summer through spring, leaving some regions with less than twelve hours of electricity per 24 hour period, often forcing schools to close and industrial enterprises to perform under capacity, due to insufficient power supplies. The problem has been compounded by the fact that both the Kyrgyz and Tajik state energy companies are in a chronic state of payment arrears to Uzbekistan for natural gas and electricity supplies. The Uzbek government usually responds by significantly restricting gas and power supplies, which causes even more severe power shortages for its southern neighbors, who then must consider using more of their water to generate additional electricity…and so the vicious cycle is perpetuated.

Attempts by all five Central Asian leaders to come to a compromise solution by keeping Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan supplied with Turkmen electricity through the
winter months, and thus allow the reservoir volumes to reach normal capacity again have failed. The constant power shortages have driven the Kyrgyz and Tajik presidents to look for an independent solution to the problem, a solution which not only will allow them to meet domestic energy demands, but also eliminate a rather sizeable lever that Tashkent can use to pressure their governments. Unfortunately, the solution upon which both Presidents Bakiev and Rahmon have seized requires even larger volumes of water – both presidents seem bound and determined to build additional dams and hydroelectric stations and both have spent the past two years scrambling to find investors willing to finance such projects.

President Rahmon has had little success in this quest, but Bakiev seemed to have hit the jackpot a year ago, when he and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev signed agreements under which the Russian government committed itself to funding the construction of Bakiev’s pet hydropower project, the Kambar-Ata 2 facility, with a $1.7 billion loan to Bishkek. However, Moscow now seems to be reconsidering the wisdom of its commitment, allegedly due to concerns that Bakiev’s administration used funds from loans issued last summer (also part of the February 2009 agreement with President Medvedev) for “unintended purposes,” as well as the aforementioned misgivings over the Kambar-Ata project’s possible environmental impact.

Both of these arguments seem somewhat contrived, not due to a lack of merit, but because of their timing. Moscow issued the first tranche of loans and bail-out funds to Kyrgyzstan last summer, in time to support Bakiev’s reelection campaign. Bakiev has made little secret of how the money has been used, but until last month, Moscow seemed to have no qualms about these expenditures. Shmatko’s sudden interest in the environmental argument is equally suspicious – there is little doubt that the Kambar-Ata project will have considerable environmental impact, first and foremost on Central Asia’s water supply. But, up until now, Uzbekistan’s President Karimov was the only one sounding the alarm
about environmental risks and not just in regard to Kambar-Ata, but to any new hydropower projects in the region. In fact, Karimov was the first one to advocate an international risk assessment of both the Kambar-Ata and Roghun hydroelectric projects (Tajikistan’s grand hope for energy self-sufficiency) and even went so far as to appeal to the United Nations to implement it.

The Russian government, on the other hand, has never before evinced the slightest interest in Central Asia’s environmental issues and would not be affected directly by any damage inflicted due to the construction of new hydropower plants. Thus, the timing is more than a little curious and raises questions about Moscow’s real reasons for putting the brakes on Kambar-Ata. Due to low oil and gas prices, as well as the global financial crisis, the Russian government and its state energy companies are experiencing hard times and this may constitute at least part of Russia’s reluctance to finance a project, which is not only expensive, but also dependent upon a resource that is becoming ever scarcer. And although Central Asia’s environmental problems are unlikely to impact Russia, if the project’s water usage turns out to generate not electricity, but armed conflict within and between the Ferghana Valley states, it could most certainly affect Russia, as well as a number of other countries in the region.

The Kyrgyz government appears to have agreed to Uzbek and Russian demands for an international assessment of Kambar-Ata’s ecological risks, so for now, the project will not advance. Spring will soon bring warmer temperatures to Central Asia, lessening the burden on the country’s electricity network and allowing the rotating power black-outs to cease. Kyrgyz Energy Minister Ilias Davydov recently promised to end electricity rationing on March 21, a date which coincides with the Nawruz or Persian New Year holiday. (5) Hopefully, he will be able to live up to his pledge and provide Kyrgyzstan’s inhabitants with a happy start to their new year.

Source Notes:
(1) “Intl study to be made of Kyrgyz hydroelectric plants project – ministers,” 27 Feb 10, Central Asia General Newswire; Interfax via Lexis-Nexis Academic.
(2) Ibid.
(3) “Efforts necessary to obtain Russia's US$1.7 billion loan for Kambar-Ata-1 HES should be made step by step - Kyrgyz PM,” 25 Feb 10, AKIpress; Al Bawaba via Lexis-Nexis Academic.

Newly Independent States: Western Region

By Tammy Lynch

UKRAINE

With Tymoshenko gone (for now), what next in Ukraine?

Ukraine’s pre-Orange Revolution old guard officially chased out the last leader of the “revolution” Wednesday, when the former opposition voted no-confidence in the government of Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko.

To do so, new President Viktor Yanukovych’s Party of Regions joined with the Communist Party, the Bloc of [Parliamentary Speaker] Volodymyr Lytvyn, a group of businessmen from former President Viktor Yushchenko’s bloc and a few defectors from within Tymoshenko’s own bloc (long known to be sympathetic to Yanukovych). (1)

The move followed the official dissolution of the parliamentary majority coalition that nominated and confirmed Tymoshenko.
The no-confidence vote made Yulia Tymoshenko an “acting” prime minister. In the past, “acting” prime ministers have stayed on during the transition to their replacements. However, Tymoshenko quickly followed the vote by saying thank you to her secretarial staff, turning over all duties to her deputies and taking leave. (2) She had said previously that all cabinet ministers would do the same, but it is not known yet if they have done so.

It is unclear what this quick exit by Tymoshenko means for the country’s ability to conduct business. However, there is little question that it could further stagnate Ukraine’s ability to restart IMF and EU economic stabilization support.

The lack of a confirmed prime minister would be fine if Ukraine were a presidential republic. It is not. The cabinet holds power almost equal to the president – including control over budgeting and the vast majority of domestic policy. Therefore, the absence of a fully functioning cabinet creates a huge hole in the state’s already ineffective governing structures.

Serhiy Teriokhin, one of Tymoshenko’s parliamentary allies, told the New York Times that, since deputy ministers are not confirmed by parliament, they have far fewer powers than “acting” ministers. He implied that Tymoshenko and her supporters planned to create maximum difficulties for Yanukovych during his first weeks in power and make him solely responsible for the country’s governing. (3)

It is conceivable that Yanukovych and Speaker Lytvyn could respond by taking over some of the functions of the cabinet, but this would be very difficult in the current combative environment, and it is not clear if it would be legal or constitutional. Any decisions introduced or approved by the president and speaker almost surely would be challenged in court for their legality by Tymoshenko’s parliamentary allies.
Clearly, the number one priority for parliament must be replacing the cabinet, not only because the PM position is essentially empty, but also because a failure to do so within 30 days could trigger new parliamentary elections. (4)

According to Ukraine’s constitution, in order to seat a new prime minister, a majority coalition first must be formed. This coalition then will nominate and confirm the premier. The procedure is complicated and difficult, particularly given Ukraine’s divided, often selfish and non-ideological political elites. Many of the country’s politicians can be swayed in any direction by offers of incentives—in particular high-level positions and financial enumeration—which makes any coalition tricky to create and difficult to maintain.

However, the primary obstacle for the creation of a majority is that it cannot be made up of random individuals. According to Article 83 of the Constitution of Ukraine, it must be formed by “a coalition of parliamentary factions” … “to include a majority of People’s Deputies of Ukraine within the constitutional composition of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.”

Additionally, Article 83 states:
“A coalition of parliamentary factions in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine shall be formed within a month from the date of the first meeting of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to be held following regular or special elections to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, or within a month from the date when activities of a coalition of parliamentary factions in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine terminated.”

Further:
“A coalition of parliamentary factions in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine submits to the President of Ukraine, in accordance with this Constitution, proposals concerning a candidature for the office of the Prime Minister of Ukraine and also, in accordance with this Constitution, submits proposals concerning candidatures for the membership of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.”
Therefore, without this “coalition of parliamentary factions” … “to include a majority of People’s Deputies of Ukraine” nothing can be accomplished – legally.

The basic new coalition that is already formed includes Yanukovych’s Party of Regions, Lytvyn’s Bloc and the Communist Party. But, these factions only provide 219 parliamentary deputies – seven members short of a “majority of People’s Deputies of Ukraine.”

A coalition of the Party of Regions plus the Our Ukraine-People’s Self-Defense Bloc (formerly Yushchenko’s bloc) would total 244 deputies – well over the required 226. However, there is no indication that a majority of the OU-PSD members want to join a coalition with Yanukovych.

Detailing the potential coalition scenarios on Thursday (March 4), Lytvyn mentioned the above two possibilities. However, he suggested the coalition with OU-PSD for 244 members was less likely. If that coalition did indeed fail, he would be left with a minority coalition of three factions for 219 members – a clear violation of Article 83 of the Constitution.

This did not appear to disturb Lytvyn. Instead, he suggested that additional individual members could be added to the coalition to form the majority – and then supported legislation submitted by the Party of Regions that would allow individuals to make a majority. This, of course, would be unconstitutional, violating Article 83. Lytvyn himself said, “There are objections and doubts about the legal purity of such a decision.” But, apparently he’s prepared to give it a try. “For me the main thing is whether 226 people take responsibility for decisions by the Verkhovna Rada,” he said. (5)

Should this happen, Yulia Tymoshenko surely will sue in the Constitutional Court. Given (unproven) charges of illegal pay-offs to these justices in the past, any
decision could be possible. But, if the Court chooses not to uphold Article 83, the legitimacy of the majority coalition—and by extension the cabinet—would be in question. In Ukraine’s fickle, changeable atmosphere, that is a point that could be exploited at any time in any number of ways.

Therefore, a number of Yanukovych allies within OU-PSD are attempting a tricky maneuver that would not only provide a new coalition, but resurrect the political career of Viktor Yushchenko. These allies are attempting to force Yanukovych to name Viktor Yushchenko as prime minister in exchange—they say—for OU-PSD members supporting a coalition. (6) It appears that only a small fraction of OU-PSD members support this move, but more may come on board if new parliamentary elections are triggered. OU-PSD faces the real possibility of not passing the vote threshold to make it into parliament in any new election. Since Lytvyn faces the same possibility, it is also in his interest to encourage this coalition.

Both Yanukovych and Lytvyn no doubt hope their new legislation allowing a coalition of individuals—which would leave OU-PSD on the outside—will have an effect on the bloc’s membership. OU-PSD members have never reacted well to the possibility of being locked outside the corridors of power.

Regardless, no matter what happens over the next few days, a new long haul began for Ukraine with the dissolution of the recognized parliamentary majority. Yet, in all of this scrambling over control of the country’s governing structures, barely a peep has been heard about the work necessary to move Ukraine out of the economic crisis still consuming it.

Source Notes:

(4) Article 90, Constitution of Ukraine via http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2006/CDL%282006%29070-e.asp.


Copyright Boston University Trustees 2010

Unless otherwise indicated, all articles appearing in this journal were written especially for Analyst. This article was originally published at http://www.bu.edu/iscip/digest/vol16/ed1609b.shtml.