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**UKRAINIAN PARTIES SCRAMBLE FOR MEDIA, FOREIGN ALLIES, AHEAD OF
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**

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When the Ukrainian parliament reconvenes in early September, the March 2006 parliamentary election campaign will officially begin. Over the summer Ukrainian political parties have been energetically seeking media resources (especially television) and foreign support.

Since Viktor Yushchenko became president, several television channels have changed hands. The big losers have been the three oligarchic clans who were the bedrock of support for ex-president Leonid Kuchma's regime and their related political parties. The Social Democratic Party-United (SDPUo) had directly controlled directly State Television Channel One, Inter, and, indirectly, 1+1. The last two channels are the largest in Ukraine.

Channel 1 is now under Yushchenko's control. Inter's president died in June and the new CEO is likely to be Valeriy Khoroshkovskiy (Ukrayinska pravda, June 30). Khoroshkovskiy is a protégé of oligarch Viktor Pinchuk (Kuchma's son-in-law) who financed the Winter Crop Generation party that Khoroshkovskiy jointly led in the 2002 election. Under Khoroshkovskiy Inter TV will be far less confrontational toward Yushchenko than it was in the Kuchma era, when it became the main anti-Yushchenko television channel.

TV 1+1 declared its neutrality and objectivity in the Orange Revolution, but now Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko is seeking to obtain influence over the channel through the Dnipropetrovsk-based Privat oligarch group. The Privat group is hostile toward Pinchuk's Interpipe, which is also from the same city. Privat reportedly provided financial assistance to the Yushchenko campaign and the Pora radical youth group in the 2004 election. Interpipe backed Viktor Yanukovych for the presidency.

Changes are coming at the three channels controlled by Pinchuk: ICTV, STB, and Novyi Kanal. New CEOs at all three channels are likely to move toward a far less confrontational stance towards the new authorities. ICTV has publicly apologized to Yushchenko for its involvement in anti-Yushchenko attacks during the 2004 election (Ukrayinska pravda, August 12).

The only channel still available for Yanukovych's Regions of Ukraine, the main opposition to Yushchenko, will be the Donetsk-based Ukrayina television.

Pinchuk is lobbying members of the Yushchenko team, such as National Security and Defense Council Secretary Petro Poroshenko, that he sees as allies in his battle with the populists in the Yushchenko coalition (the Socialists and Tymoshenko bloc) who want to take away as many of his companies as they can.

As part of his campaign, Pinchuk has turned to the European Union, Council of Europe, and European Court of Human Rights through his "Yalta European Strategy" unveiled in July (Die Presse, August 3). Pinchuk has filed a case before the European Court surrounding the

re-privatized Kryvorizhstal and will put it up for tender in late 2005.

While Yushchenko and Poroshenko cannot forgive Pinchuk for getting Kryvorizhstal for only \$800 million, they, unlike Prime Minister Tymoshenko and the Socialist-led State Property Fund, would be willing to "let bygones be bygones" and not investigate other privatization scams that involved Pinchuk. In return, Pinchuk would provide television resources to the Yushchenko coalition in the 2006 election.

Ukrainian political parties have also sought support in Moscow. First, Yushchenko signed up former Union of Right Forces leader Boris Nemtsov as his "adviser." Nemtsov's group and Yabloko were the only two Russian parties that sympathized with the Orange Revolution. Socialist Party leader Oleksandr Moroz traveled to Russia in May and, surprisingly, signed a cooperation agreement with the national-Bolshevik Rodina party, allied to President Vladimir Putin. In June, Putin's United Russia signed a cooperation agreement with Yanukovich's Regions of Ukraine (Interfax-Ukraine, June 30). The agreement continued Putin's interference in Ukrainian politics, following the 2004 election campaign, when the Russian president twice visited Kyiv and openly endorsed Yanukovich. (Ukrayinska pravda, July 2).

Ukrainian Parliamentary Speaker Volodymyr Lytvyn went to Moscow in late July to seek support. Lytvyn confided that his People's Party of Ukraine (NPU) had also negotiated a cooperation agreement with United Russia, but Regions of Ukraine beat them to it.

There are few influential Russian parties remaining that have not yet signed a cooperation agreement with a Ukrainian party. In the State Duma the only parties available are the xenophobic Liberal Democrats, with whom a cooperation agreement is not possible, and the Agrarians. While Lytvyn's NPU is Ukraine's former Agrarian Party, Russia's Agrarians remain allied to the Communists.

Lytvyn's attempt to seek support in Moscow has weakened his dwindling position in the Yushchenko coalition. First Deputy Prime Minister Mykola Tomenko publicly warned Lytvyn against seeking Russian support (Ukrayinska pravda, August 1). Lytvyn's alleged support for Yushchenko's Euro-Atlantic integration seems hollow, given his efforts to seek support from United Russia, the main party seeking to bloc such integration.