

DIVISION OPENS IN UKRAINIAN LEADERSHIP: WILL YUSHCHENKO FALL IN?

By Taras Kuzio

It was no secret that the alliance that brought Viktor Yushchenko to power in Ukraine had its disagreements. The alliance, forged in the second round of the 2004 presidential elections, consisted of an eclectic group that ranged from socialists through liberal businessmen, moderate conservatives, and populists.

The main axis has always run between National Security and Defense Council (NRBO) Secretary Petro Poroshenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. The two camps mainly disagreed on the direction of reform, pitting Poroshenko's market economic views against Tymoshenko's state-capitalist orientation (see EDM, July 13). This division has now been eclipsed by one that is potentially more damaging to Yushchenko, particularly as he prepares to visit the United States to attend the annual opening session of the UN General Assembly.

On September 5, Oleksandr Zinchenko held a devastating press conference after tendering his resignation as head of the presidential secretariat (Times, September 5 and 6).

Zinchenko had been an important member of the Yushchenko team. Until 2003 he was a senior figure in the pro-Leonid Kuchma Social Democratic Party-United (SDPUo) headed by Viktor Medvedchuk. Zinchenko was also first deputy parliamentary speaker. Then he defected to Yushchenko's Our Ukraine after the SDPUo was implicated in violent election fraud in the Mukachevo mayoral elections (see EDM, May 6). In a clever strategic move, Yushchenko appointed Zinchenko as the head of his presidential campaign.

Zinchenko used his press conference to accuse key members of the Yushchenko alliance, including Poroshenko, of corruption (5tv.com.ua/video/143/0/793; Ukrayinska pravda, September 5). Two factors explain Zinchenko's broadside.

First, the presidential secretariat has been criticized for being "totally ineffective" in terms of controlling the implementation of presidential and government decrees (Ukrayinska pravda, September 9). When Zinchenko began to cooperate with Pora leader Vladyslav Kaskiv to improve the

effectiveness of the presidential secretariat, Poroshenko claimed that Zinchenko intended to head the Pora political party for the 2006 parliamentary (Ukrayinska pravda, September 2; pora.org.ua).

Justice Minister Roman Zvarych had blocked Pora's attempts to create a political party, but the courts ruled that the Ministry should register the Pora party and backdate the registration to before March 2005 so that it can contest the 2006 election.

Zvarych is a close ally of Poroshenko, who actively defended Zvarych during the scandal surrounding the minister's fraudulent academic credentials (see EDM, May 4). Zinchenko loudly criticized Poroshenko's behind-the-scenes maneuvering and accused Poroshenko of turning the NRBO into an "all-strong and powerful new NKVD" (Ukrayinska pravda, September 5).

Prior to his resignation Zinchenko had called upon Yushchenko to "halt Poroshenko." During his press conference Zinchenko demanded Poroshenko's resignation and accused him of turning the Council into a conduit to promote cadres loyal to himself. Zinchenko also alleged that Poroshenko sought to control the judiciary and prosecutor's office. In fact, Ukrainian media have dubbed Deputy Prosecutor Viktor Shokin as "Poro-Shokin."

Second, sources close to Zinchenko have told Jamestown that a key factor propelling Zinchenko into action was the fear that Poroshenko and his allies would attempt to remove Prime Minister Tymoshenko. Poroshenko is known to covet the prime minister's job and was visibly unhappy at being denied this position in the new government. Zinchenko apparently feared that removing Tymoshenko would badly split the Yushchenko camp and decided to act (Ukrayinska pravda, September 5).

Besides Poroshenko, Zinchenko also targeted Yushchenko adviser Oleksandr Tretyakov and the head of the Our Ukraine parliamentary faction, Mykola Martynenko. All three were, he claimed, "cynically undertaking their plans to utilize themselves being in power for their own aims" (Ukrayinska pravda, September 5). Zinchenko accused all three of corrupt dealings and claimed that they had ignored Yushchenko's election promise to separate business from politics. As evidence, Zinchenko cited Tretyakov's revival of corrupt Kuchma-era practices in the energy and telecommunications sectors. Tretyakov is also disliked for limiting access to Yushchenko.

Martynenko is a wealthy businessman from western Ukraine (EDM, June 22). When Kuchma was president Martynenko controlled the Interport-Kovel Free Economic Zone (FEZ) in Volyn oblast. Before Yushchenko shut them down, the zones could import lucrative goods such as cigarettes, alcohol, coffee, and meat duty-free.

Martynenko has a cozy deal with Minister for Emergency Situations Davyd Zhvannia for supplying nuclear fuel, a sector as corrupt as any in the energy

field. Martynenko also heads the parliamentary committee on Fuel Energy, Nuclear Policy, and Nuclear Security.

Martynenko and Zhvannia backed Our Ukraine in the 2002 parliamentary election and became parliamentary deputies. They both belonged to the Razom business group, which unites politically unaffiliated businessmen and is the most influential group within the Our Ukraine bloc. Tymoshenko, like Zinchenko, has described Martynenko and Zhvannia as oligarchs and believes them to be corrupt.

The 2005 annual list of the 100 wealthiest people in Central and Eastern Europe, compiled by the Polish journal *Wprost*, includes seven Ukrainian businessmen. Besides six oligarchs, the list also includes Poroshenko, who ranks 95th with an estimated fortune of \$350 million.

Continued association with questionable businessmen such as Poroshenko could ultimately spell the end of the Yushchenko coalition. A Razumkov Center poll found that the number of Ukrainians who believed that business was being truly separated from politics had declined from 51% in April to 34% in August (*Zerkalo Tyzhnia/Nedeli*, August 27). If this trend is permitted to continue due to Yushchenko's inaction, then the Ukrainian public could come to see him as little different from those in power in the Kuchma era.