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UKRAINE'S DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN PROSPECTS FOR 2007

Ukraine's domestic and foreign prospects in 2007 depend upon the resolution of the political and constitutional crisis that began in 2006. Failure to resolve this ongoing crisis will lead to stagnation and a possible retreat from some of the gains of the Orange Revolution (see review of 2006 by Yulia Tymoshenko in *Zerkalo Tyzhnia*, December 30, 2006).

This year will see the continuation of the Viktor Yanukovich government and the anti-crisis parliamentary coalition. The coalition's Achilles heel is the Socialist Party (SPU), which has little possibility of being elected to the next parliament as long as it continues to remain in the coalition. The Yanukovich government's first 150 days have been widely criticized inside Ukraine for a lack of strategy, disinterest in reforms, no transparency, and the return of discredited personnel from the Leonid Kuchma era.

This year will also see growing demands for the Constitutional Court to reverse the infamous constitutional reforms, which transferred some presidential powers to parliament. U.S. Judge Bohdan Futey, a long-time adviser on legal reform in Ukraine, told *Ukrayinska pravda* (January 9) that Ukraine's constitutional reforms could be considered "illegitimate." The Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc, which has consistently opposed the reforms, and Our Ukraine will support their reversal.

The constitutional reforms could be abolished through a national referendum this year, as the Constitutional Court mandated in a November 2006 ruling. The Party of Regions has threatened to add two additional questions to any referendum, such as supporting the elevation of Russian to a second state language and on Ukraine's membership of NATO (*Ukrayinska pravda*, January 2, 4).

The Tymoshenko Bloc has been consistent in its demand for early parliamentary elections, although leading deputy Mykola Tomenko is skeptical that this will take place in 2007 (*Ukrayinska pravda*, January 1). Starting this fall, the opposition will therefore begin to prepare for the October 2009 presidential elections. President Viktor Yushchenko will increasingly be seen as a lame-duck president, and that the main election contest in 2009 will therefore be between Yanukovich and Tymoshenko.

This year will also see the growth of a united opposition to the anti-crisis coalition that will build a protest movement similar to that which emerged during the Kuchmagate crisis. Then and now, the main opposition force is the Tymoshenko Bloc, with the difference being that it now has the second-largest parliamentary faction.

The Tymoshenko Bloc has been strengthened by an alliance with the Reforms and Order Party. The opposition coalition will be augmented by defectors from Our Ukraine grouped around Mykola Katerynychuk's European Platform for Ukraine and SPU defector Yuriy

Lutsenko's Civil Movement for People's Self-Defense (*Ukrayinska pravda*, January 2).

In the foreign policy domain, Ukraine's 2007 prospects look poor. The domestic crisis and the failure to re-establish an Orange coalition following the March 2006 parliamentary elections has led to a de facto return of multi-vectorism in Ukraine's foreign policy (*Ukrayinska pravda*, January 2). Multi-vectorism is a product of different foreign policy orientations espoused by the president and prime minister. One anticipated foreign policy success is Ukraine's entry into the WTO ahead of Russia, which will give Kyiv added leverage in its trade and energy negotiations with Moscow.

In addition, the EU has offered to begin negotiations with Ukraine on a free trade area following its WTO membership. These negotiations will begin in the second half of 2007, but they are unlikely to be concluded until the first half of 2008. Ukraine will also negotiate a visa-free regime with the EU.

This year will be the last of the ten-year Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the EU and Ukraine. An Enhanced Agreement and European Neighborhood Policy-Plus (ENP+) will replace the PCA. However, neither of these two formulations, like the PCA, offers future EU membership for Ukraine.

These developments will strengthen the European vector in Ukraine's foreign policy and, coupled with an increasingly more belligerent Russia, will make the CIS Single Economic Space less attractive for Ukraine's elites.

The greatest disappointment in 2007 will be in Ukraine's relations with NATO. Ukraine's opportunity of being invited into a Membership Action Plan (MAP) at NATO's November 2006 Riga summit was squandered by the inability of President Yushchenko and Our Ukraine to place national interests above personal conflicts with Tymoshenko.

Ukraine's recent cooperation with NATO is at a higher level than that under Kuchma, as Ukraine was invited in 2005 to join the Intensified Dialogue on Membership. Nevertheless, Ukraine is continuing the Kuchma-era policy of intensive cooperation with NATO while not seeking membership. NATO membership will not return to the domestic agenda until the country's next election cycle (in 2009-2011) is completed.

Intensive cooperation with NATO could be undermined if Defense Minister Anatoliy Hrytsenko is removed, as the anti-crisis coalition has threatened following its unconstitutional dismissal of Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk in November 2006. Hrytsenko is the only Orange minister left in the Yanukovych government, and his support for Ukraine's NATO membership is at odds with that of the anti-crisis coalition and government.

--Taras Kuzio