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Taras Kuzio: Yushchenko should not have called the Ukraine to the ballot box

In the forthcoming parliamentary elections, the Ukrainian president Victor Yushchenko hopes to get around 15 to 16 per cent of the vote for his supporters and then enter into a grand coalition with the Party of the Regions.

This would give Yushchenko about 50 seats in the December elections, but the president still expects to be able to appoint the prime minister. He wants to appoint a "technical" figure such as the speaker of the Rada, Arseniy Yatsenyuk. Yushchenko is only able to work with a "technical" prime minister (an office holder without his own distinct political identity).

By forming such a coalition, Yushchenko expects the Party of the Regions to support his presidential campaign. He will put the case to the oligarchs in Eastern Ukraine that the Ukrainian prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko is the real danger to their interests and present himself as the status quo president. This strategy could easily fail. Yushchenko may not win 50 seats; the number of deputies supporting him could be closer to 20.

Tymoshenko will campaign on the basis that she didn't want the election, but it has come at an opportune time for her. She could get 35 to 37 per cent of the vote, which, as some parties do not cross the threshold for representation in the Rada, would translate to more than 40 per cent of the seats. Tymoshenko may return as prime minister, at which point the West will ask itself and the Ukraine's executive what was the point of all this.

Alternatively, the Party of the Regions could form a coalition with the Communists and Lytvyn. They will then make the case to the Akhmetov clan that they are in a strong enough position to put forward Viktor Yanukovich, the leader of the Party of Regions, as prime minister and eventual presidential candidate. If this occurs,

Yushchenko is finished. Yushchenko has thrown the dice up in the air, hoping for the best, but he has little idea how they will land.

Everyone is amazed that he is going into an election with a popularity rating of just 7 per cent. This is the end of the Yushchenko–Tymoshenko alliance. It is very hard to see how they could patch things up now.

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