

Nico Lange, director of Ukraine program and Kyiv office of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation, which promotes freedom, liberty, peace and justice. .

SBU versus Western analysts

Alexander J. Motyl and Taras Kuzio
Kyiv Post, 29 June 2010

The 10-hour detention on June 26 in Kyiv's Boryspil Airport of Nico Lange, Ukraine's director of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation, signifies a return to pre-August 1991, KGB-style tactics in Ukraine.

This, combined with other recent pressure on journalists, is a worrying development. The incident shows the degree to which Ukraine's young democracy is threatened by a return to neo-Soviet semi-authoritarianism.

The only other occasion when a foreigner was prevented from entering Ukraine under ex-President Leonid Kuchma was in 2000 when Jed Sunden, then owner of the Kyiv Post, Korrespondent and other publications, was detained but then, like Lange, allowed to enter the country.

In the U.S.S.R., the KGB had blacklists of foreigners and it would seem from the Lange detention that the SBU has for the first time in Ukraine's two decades of independence drawn up similar KGB-style blacklists of Western analysts.

I was on a KGB blacklist and was expelled from Moscow's Sheremetevo Airport in April 1990 on my way to attend the inaugural congress of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union. These KGB blacklists disintegrated at the same time as the KGB disintegrated after the failed August 1991 hard-line putsch. Will Western academics and experts be now prevented from visiting Ukraine because they have been put on the blacklist – just as prior to August 1991?

The return to KGB-style tactics in Ukraine is aided by the cooperation of the Security Service of Ukraine's with Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB). With this, comes the re-definition of what constitutes a threat to the Ukrainian state. The current authorities have adopted the Russian-Belarusian threat perception that sees the West (especially the United States) as the main threat to Ukrainian national security.

Anti-Americanism resurfaced in Ukraine in response to the Kuchma-gate crisis. This started in 2000, after the murder of journalist Georgiy Gongadze on Sept. 16 of that year and the subsequent release of secret tapes with Kuchma's voice, who allegedly plotted taking action against Gongadze and other crimes with top aides.

This rising anti-Kuchma sentiment led to the rise of Viktor Yushchenko and Our

Ukraine, which won the 2002 parliamentary elections. This anti-Americanism was tempered by Kuchma's support for NATO membership. He twice sought membership action plans into the military alliance in 2002 and 2004. Also, in 2003, Ukraine sent the third largest contingent of troops to support the U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq.

Today, President Viktor Yanukovich's re-orientation towards Russia and his anti-Western stance is no longer tempered by pro-Western foreign policies, as they were when he was prime minister under Kuchma in 2002-2004. In effect, we now have the "Putinization" of the media (as Natalia Ligachova, editor of Telekritika online media site) has written and the "Putinization" of Ukraine's security forces (See my article at [www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=36517](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=36517)).

The Lange detention confirms that Ukraine, for the first time in its history, is pursuing a single vector pro-Russian foreign policy (rather than Kuchma's multi-vectorism). Yanukovich and his current foreign policy team are, therefore, very different from Kuchma-Horbulin in the 1990s, especially in their attitudes towards NATO and Russia. [Volodymyr Horbulin was Kuchma's national security adviser.]

Yanukovich is the first president opposed to NATO membership who does not see NATO as a stepping stone to European Union membership (as all Eastern European countries had). But, how serious is the claim that Ukraine seeks EU membership?

If you really want to join the EU you don't spoil relations with Germany, a key country in Europe with a Russophile elite that should be lobbied, not ostracized. The lack of seriousness of the current Ukrainian leadership's intentions are also to be found in choice of domestic policies as they lead to democratic regression, a return to semi-authoritarianism and thereby away from European values.

Ukraine has given away its "NATO card" to bargain with Russia (which Kuchma-Horbulin used in the 1990s) to pressure Moscow to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Damaging relations with Germany and undermining Ukraine's integration into the EU is also tantamount to giving away Ukraine's "EU card."

The SBU under Yushchenko was never reformed into an institution under democratic control and continued to remain as an extension of the presidential apparatus. Yushchenko, head of Our Ukraine party, and former SBU chairman Valentyn Nalyvaychenko, head of Renewal of the Country (Onovlennia Krainy, a non-government organization) should explain to Ukrainian voters why they should trust the democratic credentials of their party and NGO after their failure to reform the SBU?

The lack of reform in the SBU is evident in the speed with which the SBU has quickly returned to KGB-style operating tactics.

The failure of Yushchenko to punish any of the organizers of the 2004 presidential election fraud, in which Yanukovych was officially declared the winner, has rebounded like a boomerang on Ukraine. Those who were never punished are now dismantling the democracy that emerged following the Orange Revolution, the peaceful protests that led the Ukrainian Supreme Court to overturn the fraudulent Nov. 26, 2004, vote. Yushchenko won the Dec. 26, 2004, re-vote – considered an honest election by domestic and international observers -- in a head-to-head match against Yanukovych.

The dismantling of Ukraine's democracy is destroying what Yushchenko claims was his biggest legacy.

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