

Pro-Russian Old Guard, Returns to Run Ukrainian Security Forces

Publication: Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 7 Issue: 59
March 29, 2010

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President Viktor Yanukovich and Prime Minister Nikolai Azarov are both ignoring the sensitivities of "Orange" Western and Central Ukraine by returning to positions of power individuals from Leonid Kuchma's second term in office. Moreover, defectors from the Kuchma regime, who had received asylum in Russia out of fear that Viktor Yushchenko would implement the Orange Revolution slogan of "Bandits to Prison!" are in the process of returning to Ukraine (EDM, April 14, May 25, 2005). On March 21, *Ukrayinska Pravda* reported the return of two individuals (Borys Kolesnikov and Viktor Tikhonov) involved in organizing the November 2004 separatist meeting in Severodonetsk (EDM, November 28, 2004). Criminal charges against separatists that were filed in 2005, as in other prominent cases involving Ukraine's elites, were never completed (EDM, June 23, 2005). Many of those returning to the security forces were wanted by Interpol, but had received asylum in Russia, ready to return if and when their patron, Yanukovich came to power. They have returned to the Interior Ministry (MVS) and head oblast branches in "Orange" Western and Central Ukraine (*Ukrayinska Pravda*, March 21). First Deputy Sergei Popov headed MVS internal forces despatched to crush the Orange Revolution on November 28, 2004, but were turned back by the intervention of the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) and the military. Vasyl Vartsaba served as a militia officer and was removed in December 2004. Seven months later he was placed on an Interpol international watch list. He helped to organize the first incident of violence that shook the 2004 elections in the Mukachevo mayoral election in April of that year (EDM, May 5, 2004). Vartsaba is to head the Galician region of Ivano-Frankivsk's MVS, while his deputy in 2004, Viktor Rusyn, will head the Trans-Carpathian MVS. Rusyn spent six months in jail in 2005, for his part in election fraud and violence in the previous year (*Ukrayinska Pravda*, March 21). Defectors currently living in Russia, ready to return to Ukraine, include the former Odessa

Party of Regions leader, Ruslan Bodelan, and General Mykola Bilokin, who headed the MVS in 2004 (EDM, July 20, 2004). The most notorious returnee will be the former Deputy Chairman of the SBU Volodymyr Satsiuk (in 2004), who owned the dacha where Yushchenko was allegedly poisoned. Another individual set to return is Ihor Bakay, who fled to Russia in December 2004 after misappropriating over \$1 million as head of the DUS (department that serves senior officials). Korrespondent magazine (March 18) analyzed the Azarov cabinet and found it was not only dominated by "Donetski" and Party of Regions members, but also by wealthy businessmen such as Deputy Prime Ministers Kolesnikov, Sergei Tigipko and SBU Chairman Valeriy Khoroshkovsky (EDM, March 18). Another factor that Korrespondent exposed was that 12 out of 29 members of the Azarov government had been implicated in criminal cases or were witnesses to them. Nearly half the cabinet are former high ranking members of the Soviet Ukrainian nomenklatura or KGB. Among the 29 cabinet members, 13 were former KGB officers or had collaborated with the Soviet security departments (<http://chykulay.livejournal.com/11787.html>). The best known example is Deputy Prime Minister Volodymyr Sivkovych, who has responsibility for overseeing the security forces. Foreign Minister Kostyantyn Hryshchenko, the Ukrainian Ambassador to Russia under Yushchenko, had high ranking ties to the communist nomenklatura. Hryshchenko's career was developed in Moscow during the Soviet era. Although Hrushchenko has a reputation as a professional diplomat, the political expert Oleh Medvedev pointed out that Hryshchenko had admitted that the Russian leadership lobbied for him to receive the post (Ukrayinska Pravda, March 22). On March 21, Hryshchenko said on Inter channel that "Ukraine will never allow any organization she remains within to be used against Russia." After the Orange Revolution, Hrushchenko joined the Republican Party (RPU) established by the "Godfather" of the opaque gas intermediary RosUkrEnergo and now Minister of Fuels and Energy, Yuriy Boyko (Ukrayinska Pravda, March 13). Hryshchenko was number 18 on the "Ne Tak!" (Not Like That!) election bloc organized by the Social Democratic United Party (SDPUo) for the March 2006 elections. Ne Tak! stood on a virulently anti-NATO platform and failed to enter parliament after receiving only one percent of the vote, thus ending the SDPUo's hopes of re-entering post-Kuchma

politics. Boyko, who was on the verge of arrest in summer 2005 for abuse of office when he was head of Naftohaz Ukrainy in 2002-2004, switched to the stronger Party of Regions with which the RPU merged in 2007. Boyko stood in the Party of Regions list in the 2007 elections. Yanukovych and Azarov have claimed they would prioritize the struggle against corruption but this, as in the Kuchma and Yushchenko era's, is very likely to become a "virtual" struggle. A real campaign against corruption requires political will demonstrated by the Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, but which Yanukovych lacks. The German think tank, Transparency International, assigned Ukraine and Russia both 146th rankings last year and Georgia 66th in their annual corruption index (www.transparency.org). In the past two decades, Ukraine has adopted and passed on corruption, seven laws, two criminal codes, 16 presidential decrees, ten government resolutions, two instructions, two supreme court resolutions, and two orders from the finance ministry and civil service (Natsionalna Bezpeka i Oborona, no.97, 2009, www.uceps.org/ukr/journal.php). Despite one of the largest and most rapid transfers from state to private control of any economy, the SBU and prosecutor-general's office has never convicted a single member of the Ukrainian elites for abuse of office or corruption. Half of Ukraine's 14 wealthiest oligarchs are parliamentary deputies and most of these were elected as members of the Party of Regions. An opinion poll quoted in Natsionalna Bezpeka i Oborona (number 7, 2009) asked which parliamentary political forces are most prone to corruption and which most seek to combat it. The Party of Regions was considered to be most prone to corruption (14.3 percent) and only 5.1 percent believe that they actively combat the phenomenon. The Yulia Tymoshenko bloc scored 13 percent and 14.9 percent respectively, the only political force where more Ukrainians believed that they fought corruption. Yanukovych and Azarov have not implemented cadre policies that would unite Ukraine, as the former promised in the election campaign, and the government cannot in any shape or form be considered reformist.