

WASHINGTON, D.C. February 12, 2010



**TO: NCSJ Leadership and Interested Parties**

**FROM: Richard Stone, NCSJ Chairman;  
Alexander Smukler, NCSJ President;  
Mark B. Levin, NCSJ Executive Director**

In Brief

Dear Friend,

Please see below for NCSJ's Weekly News Update.

Sincerely,



Mark B. Levin  
Executive Director



Advocates on behalf of Jews in Russia,  
Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia

NCSJ WEEKLY NEWS BRIEF  
Washington, D.C. February 12, 2010

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## #1a

### **Volgograd Hosts Eleventh Annual Youth Seminar FJC, February 10, 2010**

VOLGOGRAD, Russia – In early February, the eleventh seminar for Jewish young adults took place in Volgograd. The event, entitled "The Jewish View of the World," was organized by the Jewish community of Volgograd, in particular Chief Rabbi of Volgograd Zalman Yoffe and the chairman of the Volgograd Jewish Community Center, Yael Yoffe.

About 30 young adults from Moscow, Sochi, Kostroma, Saratov, Samara, Kursk, Bryansk, Togliatti, Volgograd and Perm attended the seminar. The weekend-long program included lectures, workshops, role-playing, and hands-on learning.

Without exception, all participants felt that one of the most beneficial aspects of the seminar was the opportunity to hear outstanding lecturers, including Rabbi Dovid Karpov, Rabbi Michoel Gitik, and Rina Shprintsin.

The lectures covered topics such as psychology, marriage, Jewish identity, the Torah and modernity, the history of Chassidism, Kabbalah, the Tanya, personal relationships, and much more.

The seminar also included dance classes, a Beit Midrash study hall, theatre, and a "talk show." The programming at the seminar was rich, vivid and varied.

At the conclusion of the weekend, three young men decided to continue their Jewish studies in yeshiva. In addition, a couple became engaged at the seminar. This is the fourth time such a momentous decision was made at the Young Adult Seminar.

**#1b**  
**Russian Gay Groups Sue Moscow Officials In European Court**  
**RFE/RL, February 11, 2010**

MOSCOW -- Russian gay and lesbian organizations have filed a lawsuit with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg against the Moscow city authorities for rejecting their requests for marches and rallies, RFE/RL's Russian Service reports.

The organizations said that the Moscow authorities have violated their civil rights by banning rallies and other gatherings, including a march in May 2009.

They want Moscow's city administration to pay 200,000 euros (\$270,000) in compensation.

The Strasbourg court has already received three lawsuits from gay and lesbian groups about Moscow officials' decision to ban their parades in the Russian capital in 2006, 2007, and 2008. The court has not yet scheduled hearings on those cases.

**#1c**  
**Albright: NATO is no threat to Russia**  
**AP, February 11, 2010**

MOSCOW -- Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright says she's surprised by Russia's new military doctrine naming NATO as a top threat to the nation's security.

She said Thursday that the alliance is "no threat to Russia" because it has altered its Cold War-goals to fighting global problems such as terrorism and drug trafficking.

Albright is heading a panel crafting a new mission statement for NATO. She and other panel members are visiting Moscow.

Albright has met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Russian lawmakers.

Russia's relations with NATO have been strained for years over the alliance's eastward expansion. Moscow has been particularly worried about the alliance's plans to offer membership to Ukraine and Georgia.

**#2**  
**Visit Furthers Boston-Dnepropetrovsk Jewish Cooperation**  
**FJC, February 5, 2010**

DNEPROPETROVSK, Ukraine – The Jewish community of Dnepropetrovsk hosted a delegation from its sister organization, the Jewish community of Greater Boston (Massachusetts, USA). The delegation included longtime friends of the Jewish community, who have already visited Dnepropetrovsk many times.

Visitors included Beth Moscowitz, chairman of the Post-Soviet Jewry Committee, JCRC International Partnerships Director Jim Morgan, JCRC coordinator Noga Nevel, Dr. Lewis Lipsitz, who is Chief of Gerontology at the BIDMC Harvard Medical School, and Louise Lipsitz, Chair of the JCRC's English language Committee and a school director in Boston.

During the short but intensive visit, he guests visited the Resource Center for Children, the Beit Baruch Home for Assisted Living, a Jewish school, and many other Jewish organizations in Dnepropetrovsk, including the ORT Center and Chesed Center. Meetings with the leaders of Jewish organizations, leading medical experts, as well as informal discussions with members of the Jewish community's Board of Trustees – Igal Rogov, Evgeniy Sharinov and Igor Raberov – also took place. Existing programs were discussed, as well as plans for new programs.

There was particular interest in the progress of a program that focuses on small business development for women. The Boston delegation discussed the project with Nina Raberova, the chairman of the microcredit committee, other committee members and the coordinator of the entire project, Natalia Rier.

Upon visiting the Beit Baruch Center, the guests from Boston brought a gift with them 100 anti-flu vaccines to protect the elderly residents. Dr. Lipsitz discussed the problem of maintaining the health of Beit Baruch residents and made valuable recommendations, as a leading specialist in the field of gerontology.

"Dr. Lipsitz came especially to show his support of our plans to create a gerontology center. His experience and knowledge, his advice as to its vision and strategy, is truly invaluable for us. Dr. Lipsitz has come to help us lay the groundwork here," commented Zelig Brez, the director of the Dnepropetrovsk Jewish community.

The delegation discussed the possibilities for new cooperative projects. ORT officials made a presentation on the successful work of their organization and discussed the possibility of using ORT's technological and methodological base for implementing joint projects between the Dnepropetrovsk and Boston Jewish communities. The delegation also enjoyed a very informative and productive meeting with Chief Rabbi of Dnepropetrovsk Shmuel Kaminetsky.

### **#3**

#### **Government Textbook on Basics of Judaism Completed FJC, February 9, 2010**

MOSCOW, Russia – The Ministry of Education of Russia has begun a pilot project for teaching students in the fourth and fifth grade about the foundations of world religions. Nineteen different regions of the country have been selected to take part in this pilot project.

As part of this project, six topics are being prepared for the students, and their parents, to study. The first four are dedicated to learning the basics of the most common religions in the country (Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism), while the remaining two focus on the history of world religions and the foundation of secular ethics. However, students will only be able to study one of these topics.

The Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia has prepared the textbook on the basics of Judaism for this pilot project. One of its authors and a spokesman for the Chief Rabbi of Russia, Andrey Glotser, commented on this new textbook. His statements are outlined below.

"We faced a difficult task – to prepare a basic textbook to explain to children studying in grades four and five about Judaism. I think we managed the task well, but had to achieve this in a short time period of just two months.

The topics covered in the textbook include an introduction to Jewish spiritual tradition, the foundations of faith, the Exodus from Egypt, Jewish holidays, traditions and customs. A separate unit is devoted to the theme of Good and Evil. We chose a narrative form of presentation, to include Jewish proverbs, stories and legends. There are issues and questions for discussion in class, as well as homework assignments. At the end of the fourth semester of the school year, students will have the chance to read and discuss a few stories to summarize the course. But the question of how the children's grasp of the material will be tested will be decided by the individual teachers. We tried to make the material simple and accessible so that it would be understandable for children from Jewish families, as well as from other faiths.

With regard to the temptation to "proselytize," in principle, Judaism does not engage in religious propaganda and the textbook we have created is far removed from such a concept. It may perhaps be the case that this task was more challenging to achieve for representatives of the Muslim and Christian faiths, and perhaps impossible to

achieve with complete objectivity in the context of religion. Every two weeks or so, we would meet to discuss our work with colleagues from other religious groups, and provided each other with feedback and advice. But there was no competition between the groups or any desire to "win" over the others or anything like that. The lack of time pushed everybody involved to just focus on the work necessary for their respective textbooks."

#### #4

### **In Ukraine, a Parting Shot From an Unpopular President**

**By James Marson**

**Time, February 6, 2010**

Officially a lame duck after being eliminated in the first round of Ukraine's presidential election last month, the country's massively unpopular leader, Viktor Yushchenko, is going out with a parting shot that will stir up even more resentment among his critics. In one of his last acts as leader, Yushchenko has publicly honored a World War II-era nationalist leader believed by some historians to have collaborated with the Nazis and participated in the ethnic cleansing of Poles and Jews, naming him a "Hero of Ukraine." The decision, quite predictably, has angered an array of parties, from Jewish organizations to the governments of Poland and Russia to everyday Ukrainians fed up with the disappointments of his presidency.

The reaction to the commemoration of Stepan Bandera shows just how complex history in this part of the world is — and how sensitive people still are to what happened during the war. Born in 1909 in what is now western Ukraine but was then a part of Poland, Bandera became a regional leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in the 1930s, a radical group modeled after other European fascist movements. The organization's aim was to throw off the shackles of foreign domination — Russia in the east and Poland in the west — and establish an independent Ukraine. So when Nazi Germany invaded Soviet-occupied Poland in 1941, Bandera cooperated as a means of achieving that goal, including allegedly killing Jews. "He was a small tyrant, a fanatic, but one with one clear goal in mind: an independent Ukraine," says David Marples, a historian and author of the book *Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine*. (See *TIME's Pictures of the Week*.)

But the Nazis didn't want Ukraine to be independent, either, and Bandera was arrested and sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. His followers carried out partisan attacks against the Germans, but also slaughtered thousands of Polish civilians in their drive to rid the country of foreign elements. When the Soviets swept through the country in the fall of 1944, Bandera's followers began to fight the new occupier — a guerilla war that continued into the early 1950s. Bandera was killed by a Soviet agent in Munich in 1959. Following his death, he came to be viewed as a martyr and his name became a symbol of the Ukrainian independence movement. In awarding the title of "Hero of Ukraine" to Bandera on Jan. 22, Yushchenko cited his "indomitable spirit in standing up for the national idea and demonstration of heroism and self-sacrifice for an independent Ukrainian state."

Yushchenko, who was enormously popular after he swept to power in the Orange Revolution of 2004, made strengthening Ukrainian identity a central part of his presidency. He promoted the use of the Ukrainian language and sought to distance Ukraine from its former rulers in Moscow. He also encouraged a nationalist-oriented revision of Ukraine's history, recognizing heroes who fought for independence and seeking international recognition of the 1932-33 Holodomor famine, during which millions of Ukrainians starved to death as a result of Joseph Stalin's economic policies.

But Ukraine is split on Bandera's legacy to this day: many in the more nationalistic west supported Yushchenko's move to honor him, while those in the Russian-speaking south and east of the country were furious, as they still hold to the Soviet-era view of him as a traitor. One legislator in Crimea, which has a sizable Russian population, even burned his Ukrainian passport in protest. Critics say Yushchenko moved too fast in honoring such a divisive figure and should have left it to historians to further examine Bandera's past first. "We are all badly informed about Ukraine's history in the 20th century because we studied in Soviet schools," says Stanislav Kulchyt'skiy, a respected Ukrainian historian. "The ground needed to be prepared. ... The fact that it splits society wasn't taken into account."

The Bandera award made waves outside Ukraine's borders, too. The Russian government called the decision to commemorate him "odious" and Polish President Lech Kaczynski said it went "against the process of historical

dialogue and reconciliation." The Simon Wiesenthal Center, a Jewish human rights organization, wrote to the Ukrainian ambassador in the U.S. to express its "deepest revulsion."

There's one thing most Ukrainians agree on — Yushchenko should have spent less time and energy on history, and more on the massive problems of the present. Yushchenko managed only a fifth-place finish in the first round of the presidential election last month, garnering 5% of the vote, in part because he never delivered on promised economic reforms or successfully clamped down on corruption during his five years in office. "The state's falling apart as he's deciding who's going to be the next Hero of Ukraine," Marples says. Or, as the influential newspaper *Dzerkalo Tyzhnia* put it, Yushchenko has had the opposite effect of King Midas: "Everything he touched rotted."

## #5

### **For Kremlin, Ukraine Election Cuts Two Ways**

**By Clifford J. Levy**

**New York Times, February 9, 2010**

KIEV, Ukraine — The apparent victory of Russia's preferred candidate in the Ukrainian presidential race may be a relief to Vladimir V. Putin, who has long sought to discredit his neighbor's raucous democracy and its drift to the West.

But it comes with a catch: the election won by the candidate, Viktor F. Yanukovich, was highly competitive, unpredictable and relatively fair — just the kind of major contest that has not been held in Russia since Mr. Putin, the prime minister, consolidated power.

On Monday, for example, European election monitors praised the election that was held Sunday, calling it an "impressive display" of democracy. Ukraine's election, in other words, did not follow the Kremlin blueprint and, if anything, seemed to highlight the flaws in the system in Russia. As such, it presented a kind of alternative model for the former Soviet Union.

The official tally released on Monday showed that the opposition leader, Mr. Yanukovich, defeated Prime Minister Yulia V. Tymoshenko by three percentage points, giving him a comeback from his loss in the 2004 Orange Revolution.

Ms. Tymoshenko helped spearhead the Orange Revolution, which first brought Western-style democracy to Ukraine. While her defeat might indicate a rejection of the revolution, the fact that the country carried out a contentious presidential election that was widely considered fair suggested that the Orange legacy had endured.

Olexiy Haran, professor of comparative politics at Kiev Mohyla University, said that many Ukrainians were disappointed in the Orange Revolution, given the political tumult of recent years, but they nonetheless appreciate what it has sown.

"Ukrainians did not gain much of what they were promised in the social or economic spheres in 2004, but at the same time, they are enjoying democracy," Mr. Haran said. "They can criticize, they can watch television political talk shows with enthusiasm. They have real choices."

"They would like order and stability, and they want strong leaders," he said. "But that does not mean that they are going to sacrifice their democratic freedoms for that. This is the difference with Russia."

Other analysts agreed, saying that while the public ousted the Orange government, it did not want to do away with all aspects of the Orange democracy. They said a backlash would occur if Mr. Yanukovich tried to crack down.

The Ukrainian model may have particular resonance now with recent rumblings of discontent in Russia.

Late last month, antigovernment demonstrations in Kaliningrad, a region in western Russia physically separate from the rest of the country, drew thousands of people and seemed to catch the Kremlin off guard. Some protesters

chanted for Mr. Putin's resignation, complaining about higher taxes and an economy weakened by the financial crisis.

And last week, a prominent politician from what had been perceived as a puppet opposition party unexpectedly turned on the Kremlin and lashed out at Mr. Putin's domestic policies. "Is opposition and criticism dishonest?" said the politician, Sergey Mironov. "In a civilized society, this is the duty and goal of the opposition."

It is highly unlikely that Russia will soon have Ukrainian-style openness. The question now is, what will be the long-term impact across the former Soviet Union if Ukraine can follow its successful election with a relatively peaceful transition to a Yanukovich administration?

The Kremlin was alarmed by the Orange Revolution, fearing that it would spread to other former Soviet republics, and has sought to tarnish it. Though it became apparent in recent months that Mr. Yanukovich might win, Mr. Putin did not refrain from attacking the Ukrainian system, saying that it bred political bedlam.

"We must not in any way allow the Ukrainization of political life in Russia," he warned last month.

Kiev was calm on Monday, and there was no indication that the kind of mass street protests that broke out with the Orange Revolution would occur this week.

Ms. Tymoshenko refused to concede the race, despite appeals for her to do so by Mr. Yanukovich and European election monitors. She was uncharacteristically quiet and did not make any public remarks, canceling two news conferences. Given Mr. Yanukovich's edge, it may be difficult for her to dispute the results.

The election certainly had problems, with each side accusing the other of fraud and other violations. Ukraine's television channels, mostly owned by oligarchs, sometimes seemed in the pocket of one candidate or another. Even before the campaign, many Ukrainians said the Orange government was so consumed by internal conflicts that it failed to manage the country.

In the short term, the Kremlin may have benefited from the election. Relations were tense under the incumbent president, Viktor A. Yushchenko, an Orange leader who wanted to pull Ukraine away from Moscow's orbit by joining NATO.

Mr. Yanukovich does not support NATO membership and has indicated that he will abandon some other initiatives opposed by Russia.

During the Orange Revolution, Mr. Yanukovich was assailed by his opponents as a Kremlin pawn. But in an example of the Orange influence, he has sought to refine his image and has championed Ukraine's ties with Europe.

Still, Kirill A. Frolov, a Ukrainian expert at the Institute of the Commonwealth of Independent States, a Kremlin-connected research group in Moscow, said he doubted that Mr. Yanukovich would be able to calm Ukraine's political discord.

He said people want stability, such as that created by Mr. Putin, which he added is why other countries do not want their own so-called color revolutions.

"Russia should be much more of a model for Ukraine than vice versa," Mr. Frolov said.

Yet the positive verdict presented by the European monitors on Ukraine's election might cause others in the region to draw different conclusions.

The monitors typically find most elections in the former Soviet Union to be essentially rigged. They often do not even observe ones in Russia, because their work has been so hampered by the authorities.

“Some say the Orange Revolution has failed — I say no,” said Matyas Eorsi, head of the observer delegation in Ukraine from the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly. “Thanks to the Orange Revolution, democratic elections in Ukraine are now a reality.”

**#6**

## **Curing 'Ukraine Fatigue'**

**By Steven Pifer**

**New York Times, February 10, 2010**

If Viktor Yanukovich, the winner of the presidential race in Ukraine, acts quickly to address his country’s pressing problems, he could move it out of the doldrums and cure the “Ukraine fatigue” afflicting Washington and most European capitals.

As Viktor Yushchenko exits the presidency, Ukraine faces a host of problems. It suffered a crushing 14 percent fall in gross domestic product in 2009. Unwise pricing policies and widespread corruption have put the critical gas sector in virtual bankruptcy. The nasty in-fighting between Mr. Yushchenko and his prime minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, kept Kiev from implementing needed responses to these challenges.

As a result, Ukraine fatigue has again gripped the West. This malady first broke out in 1998 in the U.S. Congress. American legislators, weary of the slow pace of reform and mistreatment of U.S. investors, scaled back their generous assistance earmarks for Kiev. A subsequent outbreak was cured by the 2004 Orange Revolution, as Ukrainians inspired the West with a determined defense of their right to have their votes counted fairly.

Unfortunately, Mr. Yushchenko and Ms. Tymoshenko, close allies during the Orange Revolution, could not cooperate in power and failed to build on the revolution’s promise. Ukraine fatigue returned with a vengeance. The country has ceased to be a priority for the European Union and, given everything now on the Obama foreign policy plate, barely registers on Washington’s radar.

Mr. Yanukovich’s victory on Sunday rings with irony. After all, the Orange Revolution threw out his tainted election. But the Ukrainian electorate has given him a new chance. He now has an opportunity — and the responsibility — to show he can provide the decisive leadership his country needs.

Whatever the preferences might have been in the Washington and Europe, Ukrainians have made their choice. No compelling evidence of major voting irregularities has emerged, and international observers praised the election for meeting democratic standards, now the norm for Ukraine. The West should congratulate and engage Mr. Yanukovich, and urge him to get on with addressing Ukraine’s daunting problems.

A serious attack on corruption would create better conditions for both Ukrainian and foreign businesses. Reforming the gas sector would strengthen Ukraine’s energy security and benefit Europe: Gas spats between Kiev and Moscow have twice in the past four years halted gas flows to Europe. Coherent policymaking in Kiev would give Western capitals something with which to work.

Tackling this reform agenda will require tough decisions by Ukraine’s new leadership. The United States and European Union should jointly send a message to Kiev containing three key points:

First, the West welcomes Mr. Yanukovich as the democratically elected leader of Ukraine. However, a reversal of the democratic progress that Kiev has made in the past five years would have profoundly negative consequences for relations with the West.

Second, the West understands that Mr. Yanukovich’s foreign policy may differ from his predecessor’s. The doors to integration and cooperation with institutions such as the European Union and NATO nevertheless will remain open; Kiev should indicate how far and how fast it wishes to proceed.

Third, the West will assess his seriousness by the seriousness of his policies. The West cannot want Ukraine to succeed more than Ukrainians do. Should Mr. Yanukovich avoid crucial actions such as energy sector reform, that

is his choice — even an understandable one given the tough politics that surround the issue. The West will still seek good relations. But Washington and Brussels should make clear that in such circumstances, Kiev should not expect the West to extend itself by intervening, for example, with the International Monetary Fund to cut Ukraine slack on meeting its loan obligations.

The goal should be to encourage Kiev to take steps that will make Ukraine more democratic, more stable and more capable of fending for itself. That will advance the country's interests and make it a better partner for Europe. If Kiev proves unwilling to take such steps, the country will linger in the doldrums — and Ukraine fatigue in the West will grow.

*Steven Pifer is a former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine and a senior fellow at The Brookings Institution in Washington.*

**#7**

## **Obama Congratulates Ukraine's Election Winner**

**By Clifford J. Levy**

**New York Times, February 12, 2010**

MOSCOW — President Obama on Thursday congratulated Viktor F. Yanukovich on winning Ukraine's presidential election, increasing the pressure on his opponent, Prime Minister Yulia V. Tymoshenko, to concede.

But Ms. Tymoshenko, making her first public appearance since losing the election on Sunday, did not say anything about bowing out, and her aides continued to charge that the voting was tainted by fraud.

The White House released a statement saying that Mr. Obama had called Mr. Yanukovich, the Ukrainian opposition leader, and wished him "success in carrying out his mandate."

"This peaceful expression of the political will of Ukrainian voters is another positive step in strengthening democracy in Ukraine," the statement said.

Ukraine has been the site of a struggle for influence between Russia and the West in recent years, and Mr. Yanukovich is considered closer to the Kremlin than Ms. Tymoshenko is. Mr. Obama's decision to congratulate Mr. Yanukovich therefore seemed a blow to any plans by Ms. Tymoshenko to contest the election.

Earlier in the day, Ms. Tymoshenko held an official meeting of her government in which she did not mention her presidential candidacy or say whether she would try to stay on as prime minister.

She did criticize Mr. Yanukovich's party, saying that it had curried favor with voters with promises to raise social spending that it would not uphold.

"After the elections, the campaign deceit starts to be exposed," she said.

With Ms. Tymoshenko declining to discuss the election results, the mystery about her intentions deepened.

She lost by 3.5 percentage points to Mr. Yanukovich, the opposition leader, in balloting that European monitors said was fair. Even before Mr. Obama called Mr. Yanukovich, European leaders had begun congratulating him.

Even so, Ms. Tymoshenko's aides have issued a stream of accusations this week insisting that fraud was rampant.

"We do not understand the conclusions of the international observers that the election occurred honestly and democratically," said Sergey Paskhalov, an official from her party. "We categorically disagree with this."

Ms. Tymoshenko is in a complicated position if she wants to discredit the election observers' reports. When she helped lead the 2004 Orange Revolution, which overturned a presidential election won by Mr. Yanukovich that was deemed fraudulent, she cited findings of the same observers to bolster her arguments.

This week, Mr. Yanukovich appealed to Ms. Tymoshenko to bow out, saying that she was causing more instability in a country that has had no shortage of it in recent years. He also said she should resign as prime minister, rather than force him to assemble a coalition in Parliament to oust her.

But on Thursday, one of her aides, Oleksandr Turchynov, a first deputy prime minister, said she would not step down, expressing skepticism that Mr. Yanukovich would be able to gather enough support for her dismissal.

In that case, Mr. Yanukovich would have to call parliamentary elections, which could cause more political discord in Ukraine.

## **#8**

### **Ukraine's Tymoshenko Finally Appears, But Next Move Unclear RFE/RL, February 11, 2010**

After three days of suspense, Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko appeared in public for the first time today since her loss to Viktor Yanukovich in the presidential election.

Ever since the February 7 runoff vote handed Yanukovich the slimmest of wins, the country has been waiting for Tymoshenko to step forward and either concede or challenge the results.

Her absence was so prolonged it sparked jokes on the streets of Kyiv that she had retired to a hair salon to seek an alternative postelection coif to her legendary blond braid.

But at her much-anticipated first appearance, at a meeting today of cabinet ministers, Tymoshenko's braid remained in place, as did her determination not to address her immediate plans. Instead, she discussed health-care policy and other social issues, before accusing her rival of deceiving the country's voters.

"Already after the election, the great deceptions of the campaign are being revealed and people need to take this into account in their future political decisions," Tymoshenko said. "Unfortunately, the Party of Regions rejected [its own campaign] promise, the improvement of social standards, in parliament."

#### **Challenging The Vote Results**

With 100 percent of the votes counted from the February 7 election, Ukraine's Central Election Commission has declared Yanukovich the preliminary winner of a closely contested race.

Yanukovich received 48.95 percent of the votes, compared to 45.47 for Tymoshenko -- representing a difference of some 888,000 votes.

The Election Commission must formally call the result of the vote by February 17.

On February 10, Yanukovich called on his opponent to concede defeat. "I officially call on [Tymoshenko] to resign and go into opposition," he said. "I also call on members of the coalition to dissolve the coalition so I can start negotiations with the various factions on forming a new government."

Yanukovich's election campaign manager, Borys Kolesnikov, also said on February 10 that if Tymoshenko did not resign, she would be dismissed and Yanukovich would find a new prime minister.

But lawmakers from the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (BYuT) have claimed that the vote was marred by widespread fraud and that the prime minister would challenge the result in court.

The Ukrainian news agency UNIAN reported on February 10 that Serhiy Vlasenko, a lawmaker from the BYuT, said his party will demand a recount of votes at all polling stations in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts as well as in Crimea - areas in the east of the country where Yanukovich dominated.

International observers and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have called the election transparent and honest.

In the days following the election, Tymoshenko had been expected to address the public regarding her next move, but did not appear before today.

After today's cabinet meeting, Tymoshenko's top aide and campaign manager, First Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Turchynov, said her government "does not plan to resign voluntarily."

**#9**

**Ukraine's democratic evolution on hold, for now**

**By Anne Applebaum**

**Washington Post, February 9, 2010**

Every revolution sparks a counterrevolution. The French revolution in 1789 was followed by Napoleon and the restoration of the monarchy. After the Russian revolution, the czar's forces regrouped and fought a bloody civil war.

Sunday's election of Viktor Yanukovich as president of Ukraine does not represent the counterrevolution -- or at least not yet. For those who don't remember, Yanukovich was the bad guy of the 2004 Orange Revolution. An ex-thug and former communist with a criminal record, he ran for president that year with the overt backing of the Russian government and tried to steal the election. After weeks of street protests he backed down and eventually allowed the actual winner, Viktor Yushchenko, to come to power. It was post-Soviet Ukraine's first truly democratic election.

Fast-forward to 2010, and many things look different: Yushchenko was a bitter disappointment to his countrymen. The recession hit Ukraine hard, and many difficult decisions were not made. The Ukrainian government still has not gotten around to privatizing land or removing Soviet-era subsidies from the budget. Tensions between the western and eastern halves of the country have not decreased. As things got tougher, politicians began squabbling among themselves, making reform impossible; the value of the currency has fallen by half.

The only thing that has remained consistent over the past four years is the democratic process itself. The most striking thing about this Ukrainian presidential election is that we genuinely did not know who would win. By contrast, the only mystery about Russian elections is the question of why they bother to hold them at all, since the winner is known long in advance. Six years after the Orange Revolution, Ukrainian political culture remains open, unpredictable and interesting -- so much so that formerly prominent Russian journalists have moved to Kiev to ply their trade.

"The difference between Russian politics and Ukrainian politics," one of them told the New York Times, "is the difference between a cemetery and a madhouse." And who has been the biggest beneficiary of this madhouse? Yanukovich, that original bad guy: Two parliamentary elections and one presidential election have been held since the Orange Revolution, and he has won all of them. Ukrainians are not an illogical people: The only real advantage of democracy is that it enables people to throw out leaders they don't like. When the various "Orange" coalitions failed to deliver the expected reforms, Ukrainians took full advantage of their voting power in order to throw them out. Anyone else would do the same.

The test now, of course, is whether Yanukovich will respect those who elected him, and ensure that democratic elections continue into the future. His success will be easy to measure: If he is evicted from office in due course, as all politicians eventually are, then he has respected the spirit of the Orange Revolution. If he tries to stay on past his term through falsifying votes, intimidating the opposition and killing journalists, as his eastern neighbors have been known to do, then we will know that the counterrevolution has come to power. And it is by these terms that we should judge him. Whether he tries to join NATO (he will not) or befriend the European Union (he might well) matters less to Ukraine's political future than the simple question of whether Ukrainians will be allowed to replace him if they disapprove of his choices.

Which does not mean that his choices are irrelevant: Ukrainians, like everybody else who lives in a democracy, will select future leaders based on their perceptions of how well their country is run. "It's the economy, stupid," is not a uniquely American slogan. In the coming months, the Ukrainian government will (and should) be far more concerned with what one regional analyst calls "geo-economics," as opposed to geopolitics. The Ukrainians need to expand their relationship with the International Monetary Fund, they need to negotiate stable and reasonable gas agreements with their Russian neighbors to the east, and they need to conclude visa and trade agreements with their European neighbors to the west. They are in need of practical, literate politicians, not ideologues. For their sake, we must hope Yanukovich is the former, not the latter.

The big questions -- Will Ukraine ultimately be "Western" or "Eastern"? Will its political culture come to resemble Europe's or Russia's? Will Ukraine eventually join European and transatlantic institutions? -- have not disappeared with the election of an "Eastern" president. But they have been put on hold, at least for the moment.

## **#10**

### **A Vote Of Confidence: Democracy Is Real Winner Of Ukrainian Election**

**By Brian Whitmore**

**RFE/RL, February 9, 2010**

Reports of the death of the Orange Revolution have been greatly exaggerated.

At first glance, the all-but-final victory of pro-Moscow opposition leader Viktor Yanukovich over Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko in Ukraine's presidential election appears to signal a reversal of the democratic pro-Western "colored revolutions" that swept the former Soviet space over the past decade.

Yanukovich, after all, was the arch villain of the Orange Revolution narrative: the Kremlin-backed candidate who was exposed falsifying the 2004 election, sparking massive street protests, and then losing a court-ordered re-vote to pro-Western challenger Viktor Yushchenko.

So does Yanukovich's resurrection in the February 7 runoff signal the end, not just of Ukraine's Orange Revolution, but of the pro-democratic wave that swept through Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova, as well? Is a resurgence of Russian influence, and the authoritarian politics that come with it, lurking on the horizon?

Not so fast, say politicians, observers, and analysts across the region. What matters much more than the result is the fact that Ukraine has pulled off what is widely seen as the cleanest election the post-Soviet space has ever seen, one in which the sitting president and prime minister went down in defeat.

"We can only envy how the electoral system works in Ukraine. We envy their freedom of speech," says Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov. "We envy their competitive elections without massive Putin-style falsification.

"This is a grandiose success story for Ukraine. It is the result of the Orange Revolution that nobody will be able to change."

Joao Soares, president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, called Ukraine's election "an impressive display" and "a victory" for democracy.

Matyas Eorsi, head of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly electoral observer delegation, said "democratic elections in Ukraine are now a reality."

And despite the air of triumphalism in official Moscow -- the daily "Izvestiya" on February 8 featured a headline reading "Orange Sunset" -- this is a precedent that may not be welcome among the Kremlin elite, which treats elections as heavily choreographed and tightly stage-managed affairs in which pre-selected candidates are essentially coronated.

A Most Positive Legacy

Russia, analysts say, may have won a tactical victory with Yanukovich's victory over the Western-leaning Tymoshenko, who is widely seen as the architect of the Orange Revolution. But the democratic precedent it reinforced could turn out to be a strategic defeat in the long run.

Analysts across the region praised outgoing President Yushchenko, who was eliminated after coming in an embarrassing fifth place in the January 17 first round, for putting democratic values ahead of his own political fortunes.

A Minsk-based political analyst, Andrey Federau, says that as a result of the election, Ukraine has established genuine pluralism and escaped a situation where power is concentrated in a few hands, as is the case in Belarus and Russia.

Tbilisi-based political analyst Soso Tsiskarishvili says Ukraine has set an example that other countries in the post-Soviet space would do well to emulate -- including Georgia, where President Mikheil Saakashvili has been criticized for backsliding on democratic principles since leading the Rose Revolution in 2003.

"Despite the unfortunate end of his political career, Mr. Yushchenko has left behind a most positive legacy, not only for Ukraine but for the entire post-Soviet space, due to the real steps he took to develop democracy," Tsiskarishvili says. "You won't find one example in post-Soviet history where a president won election amid such excitement, who then went on to lose two parliamentary elections and then failed to win re-election."

Likewise, Leila Alieva, director of the Baku-based Center for National and International Studies, says the February 7 runoff "demonstrated to the whole world that Ukraine is capable of holding a clean election" -- and that such democratic practices have become embedded in Ukraine's political culture.

"In Ukraine, it will be difficult to reverse this process," Alieva says. "The past 20 years, this transition period, has not passed in vain. There was a very intense expansion of democratic institutions. In contrast to other post-Soviet countries there was not a rollback of civil liberties, and it will be difficult to roll them back now. Yanukovich will not be able to reverse the gains of the revolution."

### A Model To Aspire To

So will Ukraine's democratic example resonate elsewhere in the post-Soviet space? Will it provide encouragement to pro-democracy activists in neighboring Belarus, who continue to battle the regime of authoritarian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka? Will the praise being lavished on Ukraine resonate with quasi-authoritarian regimes, like in Armenia?

"One hopes that what we've seen in Ukraine will be seen as a model to aspire to," says Steven Pifer, a former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine who is now a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution. "That is the kind of democratic election that we would like to see become more common in the post-Soviet space."

One place to watch closely is Georgia, which is due to hold key local elections in May that are widely viewed as a dress rehearsal for the 2013 presidential vote that will choose a successor to Saakashvili. Critics are already accusing Saakashvili of attempting to assure that a loyal and handpicked successor takes over the presidency when his term expires.

Municipal workers remove an election poster of Yulia Tymoshenko from a Kyiv street  
Saakashvili has also come under criticism at home and abroad for unduly attempting to influence Ukraine's election. The Georgian leader, a close friend and ally of Yushchenko, sent numerous electoral "observers" to Ukraine -- many of them beefy wrestlers with little experience in election monitoring -- during the January 17 first round, a move widely seen as an attempt at voter intimidation.

The Georgian president, who clearly favored Tymoshenko in the second round, has since praised the vote, saying, "Ukrainian democracy has won" and pledging to work with Yanukovich.

### Looming Disappointment In Moscow?

Analysts do say they expect a shift in Ukraine's foreign policy toward Moscow, but most stress that it will not be a wholesale abandonment of Kyiv's goal of integrating with Europe. Ukraine's NATO bid, which had scant public support, will likely be shelved. But its bid to join the European Union will probably remain on track.

"As for those Russians who now think that this is Ukraine reversing course and coming back toward Moscow, I suspect that in the end they are going to be disappointed," Pifer says. "There will be less tension between the two countries. But my sense is that the bulk of the Ukrainian elite and a large segment of the population still want to see Ukraine fully a part of Europe."

Pifer and other analysts also point out that it was former President Leonid Kuchma, who served from 1994-2004 and was viewed as pro-Moscow, who initiated Ukraine's NATO bid.

Likewise, observers say that radical changes are unlikely in Ukraine's policies in places like Moldova's pro-Russia breakaway province of Transdnister. Since 2006, Kyiv has been conducting joint EU-Ukrainian customs patrols on the Ukrainian side of the Transdnister border. The policy, an effort to combat illegal smuggling and arms trafficking, was opposed by Moscow, which called it a blockade of Transdnister. Despite Yanukovich's pro-Russian leanings, observers say the policy is likely to remain in place.

"Ukraine has its own national interests, which are to strengthen the state and eliminate risks at the border. In this sense, the Transdnister conflict is one of official Kyiv's priorities, regardless of the 'color' of those in power," says Chisinau-based political analyst Eugen Revenco.

## **#11 Tymoshenko Backers Challenge Ukraine Regions Count Reuters, February 10, 2010**

KYIV -- Votes from the presidential election were being recounted in parts of Ukraine today as defeated candidate Yulia Tymoshenko disputed the victory of opposition leader Viktor Yanukovich.

Yanukovich called on his opponent to resign the premiership and said that while relations with Russia and countries of the former Soviet Union would be a priority for his government, Ukraine needed help "from East and West" to stabilize its economy and restructure its debt.

The legal challenge mounted by the charismatic prime minister to the result of the February 7 vote has raised political tension and could deny the former Soviet republic, battered by economic crisis, a swift return to stability.

Tymoshenko herself stayed out of the public eye for a third straight day, canceling a weekly government meeting and traveling east to Zaporizhya to attend a funeral.

Yanukovich, a burly 59-year-old ex-mechanic, was also silent. But he received a small psychological boost from news of the final preliminary count by the Central Election Commission.

With all votes counted, he ended with 48.95 percent to Tymoshenko's 45.47 percent -- a lead of 3.48 percentage points or some 888,000 votes.

Some Tymoshenko loyalists have privately said they doubt whether they can prove a case of fraud against Yanukovich, and one of her lawmakers predicted she would resign in the next few days.

"I can make a prediction that it will be a statement accepting the results of the election and crossing to opposition political activity," Tymoshenko party deputy Svyatoslav Oliynyk told a panel discussion in Kyiv.

But the legal challenge launched on February 9 was being followed up. Interfax-Ukraine news agency said a recount was under way in one part of Crimea, and the Tymoshenko team said they also wanted recounts in Donetsk and Luhansk -- all Yanukovich strongholds.

Tymoshenko loyalist Andriy Senchenko told parliament that in Crimea, "We have facts that confirm that about 200,000 votes accorded to Mr. Yanukovich, were not his."

The political confusion risks setting back a resumption of International Monetary Fund lending which last year was crucial for the state finances. Bond yields jumped at the prospect of such a delay, but the hryvnia currency has traded flat.

A senior central bank official said the bank was willing to intervene on the currency market should any broad swings appear in the hryvnia-dollar rate.

#### International Endorsement

Outside the Central Election Commission building in Kyiv a few hundred supporters of the opposition leader rallied, chanting: "Ya-nu-ko-vych!"

But though tensions remained high, there was no sign of people taking to the streets in support of the fiery premier, co-architect of the Orange Revolution that overturned Yanukovich's victory in a rigged election in 2004.

A key date is February 17 when official results are to be declared and a president-elect will be named. Any proof of cheating assembled by the Tymoshenko camp has to go before a higher court in the few days following that date.

There is much at stake for the stylish 49-year-old, whose challenge to Yanukovich flies in the face of endorsements by the international community. The United States, Russia, and international monitors have hailed the election as democratic.

Yanukovich's camp has denied there is any legal basis for challenging the result and has ruled out any third round vote as happened in 2004. That vote resulted in defeat for Yanukovich at the hands of current President Viktor Yushchenko.

The official result signaled a comeback for Yanukovich, who tapped widespread disillusionment with the Orange democracy movement that delivered years of infighting instead of prosperity and stability.

His party is an ally of Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's United Russia and he is expected to tilt Ukraine more towards Russia, ending a deep chill in relations under the pro-Western Yushchenko.

But he is in the uncomfortable position of having won by only a narrow margin and without getting more than half the votes. There is a subdued air at his Regions Party headquarters and observers said it was significant he did not officially congratulate his campaign team on the outcome.

If Tymoshenko does not quit, a vote of no confidence in her can be expected in parliament, possibly this week.

Ukraine has been battered by economic crisis and badly needs to restart talks with the IMF on a \$16.4 billion bailout package derailed by broken promises of fiscal restraint.

#### #12

#### **Readout of the President's call with President-elect Yanukovich of Ukraine The White House, February 11, 2010**

President Obama called Victor Yanukovich of Ukraine today to congratulate him on his election and wish him success in carrying out his mandate. The President commended the Ukrainian people on the conduct of their February 7 vote. This peaceful expression of the political will of Ukrainian voters is another positive step in strengthening democracy in Ukraine. They agreed on the importance of continuing cooperation on nuclear non-proliferation. They also wished each other's athletes success in the Vancouver Olympic Games.

The strategic partnership between the United States and Ukraine is based on shared interests and values. These include expanding democracy and prosperity, protecting security and territorial integrity, strengthening the rule of law, promoting non-proliferation, and supporting reform in Ukraine's economic and energy sectors. The United States looks forward to working with President-elect Yanukovich and continuing to strengthen our cooperation with Ukraine's government and its Parliamentary leaders.

### **#13**

#### **Russia and U.S. Lead Calls to Reduce Nuclear Arsenals**

**By Judy Dempsey**

**New York Times, February 8, 2010**

MUNICH — For many years, the Munich Security Conference has been dominated by rivalry and suspicion between Russia and the United States. The suspicion continues to be fueled by Russian hatred of the idea of NATO expansion even further eastward, eventually admitting Ukraine.

But at the conference this weekend, the atmosphere was markedly different. On arms control, both sides tried to determine whether it was at all possible for President Barack Obama to realize his vision of a world without nuclear weapons. The debate was free of polemics and recriminations.

With North Korea already having acquired nuclear weapons and Iran seemingly determined to acquire them, and with the increase of international terrorism, U.S. and Russia officials said here that they believed the Cold War dominated by two nuclear superpowers was truly over.

Publicly, the Americans have taken the lead toward curbing nonproliferation in a remarkable bipartisan consensus.

They sent former secretaries of states as well as defense secretaries to Munich — including Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn, George Shultz and William Perry — and other leading advocates of arms control.

“In a new international landscape, the role of nuclear weapons has changed,” said Richard Burt, chairman of the Global Zero Initiative in Washington and a veteran U.S. arms control negotiator.

“For better or for worse, nuclear weapons contributed to stability through deterrence,” Mr. Burt told the Munich audience. “But now there is the competition between the forces of integration and the forces of disintegration, making the world a more dangerous place.”

Weapons of mass destruction could fall into the hands of terrorists or rogue states, he added.

To curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the United States and Russia said during the weekend that they hoped to conclude a new agreement that would envisage deep cuts in land-based strategic missiles.

Such an accord would build on the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, known as Start II, which called for the elimination of almost three-quarters of the nuclear warheads and all the multiple-warhead land-based missiles held by the United States and the former Soviet republics.

Start II was ratified by the U.S. Senate in January 1996 and by the Russian legislature in April 2000.

But the Americans and Russians said at Munich that a new strategic arms reduction treaty would be only the first step.

“Russia and the United States bear a special responsibility for the disarmament process,” said Sergei Ivanov, Russia's first deputy prime minister. “At the same time, it would be an obvious simplification to boil it all down only to Russian-American relations. Nuclear disarmament is a common objective for all parties to the Nonproliferation Treaty.”

A conference in May called to review the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, or NPT, is important for Mr. Obama as he tries to promote a new global consensus on nuclear nonproliferation.

The NPT, which entered into force in 1970, was claimed at the time as one of the most effective tools in curbing the spread of nuclear weapons.

The five permanent members of the U.N Security Council — the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France — have signed the NPT, but other nuclear states, including Israel and India, have not.

And with Iran and North Korea pursuing their own nuclear ambitions, Senator John Kerry, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, gave a grim warning.

“The NPT risks unraveling unless we do something about the challenges,” Mr. Kerry said at the Munich conference.

Mr. Obama wants to go further by having the United States ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, ban the production of fissile material worldwide and give the International Atomic Energy Agency more authority and resources to tighten the NPT regime.

Even if the United States and Russia do take the lead in reducing nuclear weapons, however, other nuclear-armed countries may not follow suit.

Mayankote K. Narayanan, former national security adviser of India, gave no hint in Munich that India would either sign up to the NPT or reduce its nuclear arsenal.

U.S. and Russian officials are not convinced that Pakistan would reduce its nuclear weapons, given its fierce rivalry with India. And it is not clear whether Britain, China and France would react to American and Russian reductions with reductions of their own.

The Obama administration is not prepared to wait for their responses.

“If we do not change our thinking, we will face the chance of a nuclear weapon attack,” Mr. Kerry said.

But neither Mr. Kerry nor Mr. Ivanov said they believed that a world free of nuclear weapons was possible in their lifetimes.

## **#14**

### **US denies defense crisis with Russia**

**By Christophe Schmidt**

**AFP, February 10, 2010**

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama's administration denied a row over the US anti-missile shield was slowing a landmark nuclear treaty with Moscow, after days of sharp Russian criticism of NATO.

Obama also pointedly contrasted Russia's "forward leaning" approach to confronting Iran's nuclear drive with China's more ambivalent stance, as Washington sought "significant" new sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

A year after taking office, Obama is hoping that a replacement for the expired Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and Moscow's cooperation on Iran will validate his decision to "reset" US relations with Russia.

But on Tuesday, General Nikolai Makarov, chief of staff of the Russian armed forces, raised eyebrows in Washington by saying the START talks, which have dragged past several deadlines, were stuck on the anti-missile issue.

Moscow has reportedly insisted that any new pact regulates both strategic offensive missiles and the anti-missile systems designed to thwart them, a linkage that the United States has never favored.

"The development and deployment of missile defenses is aimed against the Russian Federation," Makarov was quoted as saying by domestic news agencies.

"The development of these missile defense systems without question weakens our potential nuclear deterrent."

Both the State Department and the White House attempted to downplay the notions of new divides between the two former Cold War foes, and suggested that Obama was on the same page as Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

"The emerging missile defense architecture in Europe is not aimed at Russia, but rather the emerging threat from Iran," said State Department spokesman Philip Crowley.

"We continue to discuss ways in which we can cooperate with Russia on missile defense."

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs denied that the reconfigured US missile shield in Europe was in any way aimed at Russia, and said it was not complicating the final drive towards a START treaty.

"When President Obama talked to President Medvedev a couple of weeks ago, President Medvedev didn't bring this up as an obstacle," Gibbs said.

"I think the notion that somehow this is in any way an impediment to what's going on with START is simply not true. It certainly wasn't what President Medvedev told President Obama."

In September, Obama shelved plans -- fiercely opposed by Moscow -- to site elements of a US missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic, a plan pursued by his predecessor, George W. Bush.

Moscow initially welcomed Obama's decision but bristled after Romania said it, like fellow former eastern bloc states Poland and the Czech Republic, had agreed to host medium-range ballistic missile interceptors for the shield.

The new exchanges over missile defense followed several sharp critiques from Moscow about NATO in recent days.

Medvedev sparked surprise in the western alliance last week by signing a document listing among "chief outside military threats" the fact that NATO is attempting to "globalize its functions in contravention of international law."

The document also cited attempts to bring the "military infrastructure of NATO members closer to Russian borders, including by expanding the bloc."

On Tuesday, Nikolai Patrushev, the secretary of the Russian national security council warned that the NATO alliance represented a "threat and a fairly serious one" to Russia.

Seeking to praise Russia, Obama told reporters on Tuesday that although he was unsure how China would respond to a UN Security Council effort to frame tough sanction on Iran, he was happy with Moscow.

"One thing I'm pleased about is to see how forward-leaning the Russians have been on this issue," Obama said.

Andrew Kuchins, director of the Russia program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said the imminence of the START agreement, expected within months, was driving domestic suspicion of the United States in Moscow.

"There is a lot of opposition within the Russian government toward making a decision for a more positive, constructive security relationship with NATO and the United States," he said.

"There is a fundamental ambivalence towards NATO and the West, and the (signing) of the treaty is one of those watershed moments that (bring) those differences to the surface."

## **#15**

### **US ambassador: arms deal to mention missile shield**

**By Vladimir Isachenkov**

**AP, February 11, 2010**

MOSCOW -- The United States and Russia have agreed that a new arms control treaty will mention a link between offensive nuclear arms and defenses against them, the U.S. ambassador to Moscow said Thursday.

Ambassador John Beyrle's statement in his blog post could signal a potential breakthrough in the U.S.-Russian talks on a successor to the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev linked the two issues in a statement in July, but Washington had resisted Russia's push for an explicit connection between them in a successor to the treaty.

Moscow and Washington hoped that they would sign a new treaty by the end of December, but talks have dragged on. The delay apparently has been caused by Russia's deep suspicious about U.S. plans for a missile defense shield in Europe. Washington has said it is a reaction to Iran's missile threat, but Moscow has seen it as a potential threat to its security.

Beyrle's statement indicated that the U.S. stance has shifted. "Our presidents have agreed that the treaty will contain a provision on the interconnection between strategic offensive and defensive weapons," he said in his Russian-language blog.

Still, any missile defense restrictions would likely complicate the treaty's approval by the U.S. Senate.

Beyrle's statement apparently reflects an attempt by Washington to overcome Russia's suspicions of the U.S. missile defense plans.

It follows Tuesday's comments by Russia's top military officer, who said that those plans are a threat to Russian national security and have slowed down progress on the prospective new arms deal with Washington.

Gen. Nikolai Makarov's comments were the strongest yet on the revamped U.S. missile effort and showed that the arms control talks are in serious trouble, despite assurances to the contrary from the White House and the Kremlin.

Obama's decision to scrap Bush administration plans for missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic pleased the Kremlin, which had fiercely opposed those plans as a threat.

But Russia has become increasingly suspicious in recent weeks of a revamped plan by the Obama administration to place sea- and land-based interceptors around Europe. Romania last week approved a proposal to place anti-ballistic missile interceptors in the country as part of the revamped American missile shield.

Beyrle said in his blog post that the U.S. plan is intended to fend off the existing and emerging threats from the Middle East and wouldn't pose any threat to Russia.

## **#16**

### **Gates Voices Concern About Warship Sale to Russia**

**By Thom Shanker**

**New York Times, February 9, 2010**

PARIS — Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates told French officials Monday that he was concerned about their plans to sell Mistral-class amphibious assault ships to Russia, although there is little if anything the United States could do to block the deal, officials said.

Russia has been engaged in negotiations for months over what would be the first significant purchase of advanced NATO weaponry since the collapse of communism. Each Mistral warship costs up to \$750 million, and the vessels, which can launch helicopters and armored vehicles, would be viewed as a notable addition to the Kremlin's rusting fleet.

Mr. Gates chose the well-known diplomatic code for disagreement in describing his discussion of the arms sale with his French counterpart, Defense Minister Hervé Morin.

"I think I would just say that we had a good and thorough exchange of views," Mr. Gates said.

Geoff Morrell, the Pentagon press secretary, said later that Mr. Gates's meetings here were "very amicable and positive" on issues that included the NATO effort in Afghanistan, but that Mr. Gates "made our concerns very clear" on the arms sale.

The weapons deal has raised alarm in capitals across formerly Soviet territory — in particular in the republic of Georgia, which fought a war with Russia and sees the vessels as a threat that could be based in the Black Sea off its shores.

The maritime Baltic states, also former Soviet republics, have sought information from France about what weapons and advanced technology would be included.

But Mr. Morin emphasized that the cold war was long over, and that Russia is a changed nation. He said that if Moscow is to be viewed as a partner in global stability, then there should be no objections to the French sale.

"We can't have a double discourse of saying they are partners and then talking about relations with Russia as if it were pre-1991," Mr. Morin said. He acknowledged however, that "scars" of the Soviet era are still present in some nations of eastern and central Europe.

French officials have agreed to sell one of the ships to Russia and are discussing a deal for three others, according to news reports in France.

## **#17 EU Official Criticizes Belarus On Eviction Of Ethnic Poles RFE/RL, February 9, 2010**

STRASBOURG/MINSK -- The president of the EU Parliament has criticized Belarus for evicting an ethnic Polish organization from its offices, RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service reports.

"I call on the Belarusian authorities to stop taking drastic measures against the Polish minority," said EU Parliament President Jerzy Buzek, who is Polish, speaking today in Strasbourg. "An essential condition for our good relations with Belarus is its acceptance of EU norms with regard to ethnic minorities."

Buzek's comments come on the same day that Poland recalled Ambassador Henryk Litwin from Minsk for consultations. Polish Foreign Ministry spokesman Piotr Paszkowski said in Warsaw that the recall is a political signal to Belarus that Poland is unhappy with the treatment of the cultural group, the Union of Poles in Belarus (ZPB).

Paszkowski said Belarusian Ambassador to Poland Viktor Haysionak was told by Deputy Foreign Minister Andrzej Kremer during a meeting in Warsaw today that "such repressive actions are unacceptable" to Polish authorities.

ZPB activist Andrzej Poczobut told RFE/RL's Belarus Service on February 8 that police came to the group's offices in Iyvanets -- about 50 kilometers from Minsk -- and the staff was ordered to vacate the building, known as the Polish House. Poczobut was stopped by police as he was driving to Iyvanets and was prevented from continuing.

Police later seized the Polish House after it was vacated.

Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said on Polish television that he was getting ready for a "manly talk" with the Belarusian Foreign Ministry about the Ilyanets incident.

The ZPB was deregistered by Belarusian authorities after it elected Anzhelika Borys as its chairwoman in 2005. Belarusian officials have registered a progovernment alternative called the Union of Belarusian Poles, led by Stanislaw Syamashka. It was Syamashka who urged the authorities to confiscate the Polish House and give it to his organization.

Warsaw recognizes Borys's ZPB as the sole legal representative of the Polish minority in Belarus. It is a nonpolitical organization set up to promote the Polish language and cultural traditions among ethnic Poles living in Belarus. It says it has about 20,000 members.

Buzek said respect for the rights of all minorities in Belarus is "absolutely crucial" for improved EU-Belarus relations.

About 4 percent of Belarus's 9.7 million people are ethnic Poles.

## **#18**

### **Netanyahu to visit Russia: Kremlin AFP, February 11, 2010**

MOSCOW — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will visit Moscow next week, the Kremlin said Thursday, after Russia toughened its stance on Iran's nuclear programme.

Netanyahu will hold talks with President Dmitry Medvedev on Monday, the Kremlin said in a statement, providing no further detail on the Israeli leader's programme for the Monday-Wednesday visit.

Announcement of the visit came after Russia officially questioned the "sincerity" of Iran's pledges not to develop nuclear weapons and, in a policy shift, said fresh UN sanctions on Tehran were a "realistic" option.

It also followed an official visit to Moscow by Khaled Meshaal, leader of the radical Palestinian independence group Hamas that is classified by Israel, the European Union and the United States as a terrorist organisation.

## **#19**

### **Journey Through Paperwork Greets Russians Hoping for a European Getaway By Michael Schwartz New York Times, February 11, 2010**

MOSCOW — The winter holidays have only just ended here, but many Russians are already planning their next European getaway, buying plane tickets and reserving hotels.

They are also compiling bank statements, gathering insurance forms, paying fees, taking photographs, making photocopies, waiting in long lines and being interrogated by embassy officials — all to receive a European visa, a kind of permission slip to enter the rest of the Continent that like little else underscores the walls still dividing Russia from the West.

While Estonians and Bulgarians, Latvians and Poles can traipse about Europe unimpeded by the borders and bureaucracy that once bound them to Moscow, Russians must seek permission. To obtain a visa is frustrating and at times degrading, travelers here say, leaving many wondering why Russians seem so unwelcome.

"Maybe Russia is just too big, or maybe it is because of our past conflicts," Mikhail Poponin, 21, a professional skateboarder, said while lining up in subzero temperatures outside the Estonian Embassy for a visa. "Maybe they just think that Russia is a backward country."

In Russia, internal restrictions on foreign travel melted away with the Soviet collapse, and the freedom to go abroad, especially to the 27 countries of the European Union, is cherished. The European Union, however, has been a reluctant host.

Russian officials have been pressing their European counterparts for years to at least ease restrictions on Russian travelers. The visa issue has attracted renewed attention in recent weeks as European officials have suggested that they are now willing to consider doing so.

The Spanish foreign minister, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, said in a visit to Moscow that Spain, which holds the rotating European Union presidency, would use its position to push for a less restrictive visa policy.

European officials have made similar promises in the past, though most have gone unfulfilled.

A visa to enter the European Union can cost as little as \$50, but it is not the money that tends to bother many Russians. It is the suggestion that perhaps Russians could be up to no good. Travelers must provide bank statements showing they can afford the vacation. They must show proof of employment and hotel reservations and plane tickets purchased beforehand, the implication being that every applicant is a possible illegal immigrant.

But after asking for extensive amounts of paperwork, the Europeans end up rejecting very few applicants.

Europeans (as well as Americans) have to obtain visas to enter Russia, but the process for getting a basic tourist visa often is much simpler. An interview, for example, is not required.

“The current visa regime represents a clear illustration of the fact that Russia and the European Union are actually not the partners that they often declare themselves to be,” said Arkady Moshes, a researcher at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. “For the common Russian citizen, nothing more clearly represents this lack of partnership like the visa regime. It is not just symbolic. It really affects people.”

The European Union now includes former Warsaw Pact countries like Poland and Romania. But most galling to many Russians is the need to get permission to enter Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, former Soviet republics that are also now European Union members. In Soviet times, all three countries were freely visited on weekend outings and family vacations.

Albina L. Marshalkina, a 70-year-old pensioner, traveled by slow economy trains two days to Moscow from her home Veliki Novgorod to apply for a visa at the Estonian Embassy. The train ride, along with piles of paperwork, fees and a weeklong wait for a visa now separate Ms. Marshalkina from her daughter and grandchildren in Estonia. A tense political relationship between Estonia and Russia has made any unilateral easing of the visa process unlikely.

“They are there and we are here, and it is so difficult for us to go there and expensive,” she said, bundled against a frigid wind outside the embassy. “I am not concerned with what is going on in Estonia. Let them solve their own problems, but let us see our children and grandchildren. Open the border.”

The reasons for keeping the visa policy in place vary. For one, there is little political will in Europe to change it. While citizens of the European Union also need a visa to go to Russia, few are rushing to get there.

Many European member countries also have serious misgivings about large numbers of Russians freely entering the bloc, said Fernando M. Valenzuela, the head of the European Union delegation to Russia.

“We know that all these visa things are connected to issues of illegal immigration, or organized crime and drug trafficking, et cetera,” he said.

While the Spanish government seeks to raise the issue within the European Union during its presidency, he added, no discussion of the matter has begun.

Europe is certainly not the only destination for Russians with wanderlust. Turkey and Egypt are hugely popular travel spots, where Russians can easily get visas at the airport. Israel lifted all visa restrictions for Russians in 2008.

Still, people are willing to put up with the process of getting to Europe, where many now conduct business. But the hassle can be trying.

"I need to immediately go on a business trip and I have a visa, but my assistant, who I need to bring with me, has to wait six days for a visa," said Vladimir Drigant, 60, who was at the French Embassy visa center helping his grandson with a tourist visa for a separate trip.

Later, Mr. Drigant's grandson walked by, looking dejected. He did not have photocopies of all 37 pages in his passport as required, and he was told to come back another day.

**#21**  
**What Russia needs most: Civil society engagement, not appeasement**  
**Ignoring the worst abuses and empowering authoritarians means betraying our friends in Russia - and undermining US leadership around the world.**  
**By Ariel Cohen**  
**Christian Science Monitor, February 10, 2010**

Washington - The Obama administration's Russian "reset button" continues to malfunction.

The latest ignominy was a meeting last month between Russia and the United States designed by presidents of both countries to reset relations and explore new opportunities for partnership. Two days after the US-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission's Civil Society Working Group's ineffective meeting, Moscow police dispersed a demonstration to support the right of assembly provided by the Russian Constitution and arrested one-third of the participants.

The US State Department issued a feeble "concern."

Ignoring the worst abuses and empowering authoritarians means betraying our friends in Russia - and undermining US leadership around the world. Human rights and civil society have to remain part of the bilateral relationship.

Last summer, the Kremlin and the White House created the Commission to expand bilateral cooperation. Two government officials co-chair the Civil Society group (nongovernmental organizations are not members). At its first meeting, it tamely discussed child abuse, corruption "in the US and Russia," and "fighting mutual stereotypes."

The American co-chair, Michael McFaul, senior director at the National Security Council, is a Stanford professor and a democracy expert. Mr. McFaul knows Moscow and its democracy movement better than anyone in the Obama administration.

He also knows what Prime Minister Putin, and the Medvedev administration, are doing to that movement. But the White House went out of its way to make the Russians feel welcome - and feel welcome they did. The Moscow media hailed the meeting as a "dialogue of the equals."

But it can't be so: Russia is at the bottom of the Transparency International corruption index. Russia is also classified as a "mostly unfree" economy: the 143rd on The Heritage Foundation/Wall Street Journal's "Index of Economic Freedom," above Vietnam but behind Haiti. Yet the discussion focused equally on corruption there and in the US. Conservative estimates put the number of Russia's homeless children at over 2 million. Yet the group spent time discussing child abuse, which is on the decline, in America.

Indeed, anti-Americanism seems to be Russia's state policy, as the Kremlin pays for movies, TV shows, books, articles, and blogs lambasting America.

Even more important were things absent on the group's agenda. Absent from discussion were the murders of journalists and human rights activists such as Anna Politkovskaya of the Novaya Gazeta; barriers to political party activities; and pervasive censorship in the media.

Also off the menu: a political diktat in courts, which Medvedev denounced; out-of-control police who shoot innocent civilians weekly, according to Russian human rights organizations and the media; the interrogators who tortured and murdered Sergey Magnitsky and a lawyer for the British firm Hermitage Capital in the infamous Butyrki jail. The list is long, the omissions deliberate to make Russia comfortable.

As the famous Russian prisoner Mikhail Khodorkovsky said, "Where will Russia be heading in the next decade? Certainly, a political economy based upon the export of raw materials and corruption can enjoy a certain longevity, so long as there is stable demand for both."

Mr. Khodorkovsky's plight symbolizes what's wrong with Russia's necrotic "justice" system. Once the founder of the most transparent oil company, Khodorkovsky was sentenced to nine years for alleged tax evasion, and his company taken away by the state. Today, he's facing what the majority of Russian and Western legal experts consider a kangaroo court on trumped-up charges. Khodorkovsky has become one of the many proverbial canaries in the Russian coal mine of legal abuse.

Adding Russian insult to American injury was the Jan. 31 demonstration by 300 democratic activists on the Triumphalny Square in the center of Moscow. Their aim: to uphold Article 31 of the Russian Constitution, which guarantees freedom of assembly.

The Moscow police detained and brutally beat the demonstrators - sending a message that to some siloviki (men of power), the civil society dialogue with the US means nothing. Among those detained: the former First Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov; the Sakharov Prize laureate and the head of Memorial human rights organization, Oleg Orlov; and many others. A month earlier, the hallowed Lyudmila Alexeeva, the 82-year-old leader of the Moscow Helsinki Group, was similarly detained.

Granted, the Obama administration is facing a challenging relationship vis-à-vis Moscow, which includes negotiating the START Treaty, Afghanistan resupply transit problems, and UN sanctions against Iran, to name a few.

Yet, the US has to develop and implement an engagement strategy promoting freedom and human rights in Russia.

We should use every tool in our public diplomacy toolbox, such as international broadcasting, including creating a new satellite TV channel. Social media and revamped exchange programs should be a part of such a strategy. And US and European counterparts should stress engagement with the Russian civil society, including NGOs and political forces supporting transparency, markets, the rule of law, and political pluralism.

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## **#22**

**Israeli FM: Azerbaijan has unique model that can serve as example**

**By U. Sadikhova**

**Trend News, February 11, 2010**

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman spoke to the several Azerbaijani media outlets on results of his first official visit to Baku.

Q: How do you assess the results of your Azerbaijan visit?

A: Israel and Azerbaijan that are developing very dynamically have good relations. This positive trend in the right pace, of course, is a milestone in our bilateral relations - this is President Shimon Peres's visit and meeting with President Ilham Aliyev.

Our relations are very well developed in all three dimensions - from political, economic and cultural point of view. Meeting at the highest political level, the economy, the overall turnover and the volume of trade of two states - all developed in parallel and more than successful.

Maybe there are two specific factors: Israel has a large diaspora of the Azerbaijani immigrants which successfully entered into our society - Yosef Shagal, Alex Veksler, Roma Peres - they are all included in my delegation. Presence of such a diaspora helps convergence, and the human diplomacy also makes a very positive momentum in our bilateral relations. We also appreciate Azerbaijan's very tolerant and traditionally good position towards the Jewish minority. All the leaders of the Jewish community emphasized that they feel confident, comfortable and are in complete safety. The combination of tradition, tolerance and open approach to modern values - it is a very interesting model, which exists in Azerbaijan. I think there is a unique model that can serve as an example in many parts of the world.

I look forward to return visits. A large business delegation from Azerbaijan will visit Israel in March.

Q: How real is abolition of the visa regime between Azerbaijan and Israel?

A: Everything should be done naturally and in the right pace. One should not slow down it and should not artificially speed up anything. Presently, we are discussing the abolition of visa requirements for owners of diplomatic and official passports. Time will show.

Q: Israel and Azerbaijan agreed on cooperation in the use of alternative energy sources. What projects are planned in this area, in what terms and where they will be implemented?

A: We discussed several projects. Israel is probably one of the most advanced countries in all related solar energy, management of water resources, waste water purification and desalination plants.

Fundamental approval at the highest level has already been obtained. During the Azerbaijani delegation's visit these will be negotiated with their Israeli counterparts. I think we will determine the time frame, the objects and scope of this cooperation within three or four months.

Q: In his interview to the Israeli edition, Head of the Jewish community of Armenia Rimma Varzhapetyan said about the infringement of the rights of Jews in Azerbaijan. Have you faced with such facts?

A: I can speak on behalf of the Jews of Israel or the community of Moldova, with which I maintain very close relations. Regarding Azerbaijan, I can speak on behalf of the heads of the Jewish community in Azerbaijan, and it is difficult to imagine the warmer relations and more warm words. Therefore, since I'm not here for the first time and I have many friends here, my impression is that it is difficult to imagine more optimal conditions for the observance of religious and Jewish education, schools and traditions. So I think one should not confuse the interrelations of the Jewish community with interstate. We have not heard or seen nothing but good and warm relations of Azerbaijan with the Jews.

The vast majority of nations throughout the world recognized the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and our position is this: we respect the territorial integrity and believe that all disputes should be resolved within the framework of the agreements of the OSCE Minsk Group, and we hope that a breakthrough will be achieved soon.

Q: What is the level of energy cooperation between the countries? What are the volumes of oil imported from Azerbaijan to Israel?

A: Azerbaijan is one of the main suppliers of oil to Israel. With regards to gas, as we have not gas pipeline and the liquefied gas is not produced in sufficient volume, unfortunately still it is too early to talk about gas supplies. Either a

pipeline will be built or a special plant on liquefied gas will be constructed, it needs to talk about special terminals. So I think it's a more complicated question.

With regards to oil, the cooperation is quite successful, and we believe that Azerbaijan is very good and serious partner.

Q: How can cooling in relations between Israel and Turkey affect the relations between Azerbaijan and Israel?

A: I do not see any contradictions with regards to the relations of Turkey with Azerbaijan and Turkey with Israel. Our relations with Turkey should be considered within the "worldwide cooling". We hope that our relations with Turkey will return to their circle. We were not the initiators of the recent crises, and hope that they will be overcome.

Q: Did you discuss the situation in Iran during your meetings in Azerbaijan?

A: Iran is no longer a regional problem, it is impossible to solve it in a regional scale. Protests against European embassies, the statements by Ahmadinejad contradict statements of Russia's Foreign Ministry, the U.S. President. The day before yesterday very clear statements were made by President Obama. It seems that this problem is on another level and it can not be described as regional.

Q: What other bilateral visits are expected in the future?

A: A number of ministers and parliamentary delegations should come to Israel. I think that this year there will be a lot of visits by ministers, business delegations, cultural exchanges, parliamentary meetings. Minister of Education [Misir Mardanov] should visit Israel. Therefore, there will not be lack of mutual visits in 2010.

Q: There is an opinion that Azerbaijan can become a mediator in Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Is there such a question on the agenda?

A: First, Azerbaijan has very good relations with all countries in our region, including the Palestinian Authority, Jordan. However, we have a great experience, and all the peace agreements were reached through direct negotiations, not through mediation, in particular a peace agreement with Egypt and with Jordan.

I hope that by the end of this month, indirect talks with the Palestinians will start through mediation of Senator Mitchell, and within a month after this, direct negotiations will begin. Alternatives to direct negotiations between the two parties do not exist, and we believe that it needs to start indirect talks as soon as possible.