



Identifier	Created	Classification	Origin
06KIEV3130	2006-08-11 14:41:00	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Kyiv

Cable title: **UKRAINE: PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE? "ORANGE" MINISTERS**

Tags: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PARM](#) [UP](#)



[how-to read a cable](#)

[Show metadata](#)

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KIEV 003130

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/11/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV PARM UP

SUBJECT: UKRAINE: PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE? "ORANGE" MINISTERS  
SHIFT UNCOMFORTABLY UNDER YANUKOVYCH

REF: KIEV 2962

Classified By: Political Counselor Kent Logsdon, reason 1.4 (b,d)

1. (C) Summary. Interior Minister Yuri Lutsenko, who repeatedly vowed publicly in July that he would never serve under Viktor Yanukovych, revealed his continuing ambivalence in an August 11 press conference to explain why he had remained Interior Minister in Yanukovych's government, stating that he had chosen duty over political purity and would resign if pressured to do the wrong thing. Lutsenko's attitude is not unique; Justice Minister Zvarych made similar public comments August 5, and Defense Minister Anatoly Hrytsenko and First Deputy Defense Minister Leonid Polyakov expressed similar feelings privately to us in recent days. At issue is the legacy of key programs launched by Yushchenko at the heart of his agenda, and on which the US closely cooperates/supports: in the case of Lutsenko, law enforcement reform; in the case of Hrytsenko, defense reform and the drive towards NATO via a Membership Action Plan (MAP).

2. (C) Comment: Yanukovych's office sent an ambiguous warning signal late August 7 on the latter issue, with wire services quoting a statement suggesting that Ukraine's request for MAP would be delayed, despite assurances by President Yushchenko to Ambassador August 3 that Yanukovych would send a letter to NATO requesting MAP this year and comments by Yanukovych himself to EUR DAS Kramer July 28 that he "agreed with the President" on this issue (reftel). It appears that the statement on NATO, which had not appeared on any official website by late August 11, was orchestrated by Yanukovych foreign policy adviser Orel, known during the Kuchma era for his strongly pro-Russian stances. We will need to ensure that Yanukovych is not spurned during genuine efforts to pursue Euro-Atlantic integration, since failure would strengthen advisers like Orel who oppose closer cooperation with the West; in this regard, Yanukovych's visit to Brussels September 14-15 will be crucial. While Lutsenko predicted

that blue and orange forces could successfully replicate the



"peaceful coexistence" between the USSR and West during the Cold War, many worried pro-orange commentators and officials predict that Regions, driven by behind-the-scenes figures like Orel with agendas at variance with the principles expressed in the negotiated "Universal," will start squeezing orange ministers out of office by the end of the year. End Summary and Comment.

Lutsenko: No way...okay, I'll stay

3. (SBU) Interior Minister Yuri Lutsenko, who served as one of four "field commanders" on the Maidan during the 2004 Orange Revolution and helped lead the 2001 "Ukraine without Kuchma" movement, was likely the most colorful government rhetorician outside of Yuliya Tymoshenko in 2005 targeting the "banditry" of key Regions leaders, repeatedly vowing many should serve time behind bars. He resigned from the Socialist Party in early July in disgust after Socialist Party leader Moroz abandoned the "Orange Coalition" to make common cause with Party of Regions and its leader Viktor Yanukovych. Lutsenko stated publicly and repeatedly that he would not serve in a government led by Yanukovych. There was widespread surprise, therefore, that when the Rada (parliament) approved the new Cabinet late in the evening August 4, the name forwarded by PM Yanukovych for Interior Minister was none other than Yuri Lutsenko.

4. (SBU) In his August 11 news conference, Lutsenko apologized to his supporters but stated that he chose "a feeling of duty over a feeling of political purity." When he had learned August 3 of President Yushchenko's intent to nominate him to stay in place as Interior Minister (note: Yushchenko successfully insisted on being able to name the Interior Minister in coalition negotiations with Yanukovych as part of the deal not to dismiss the Rada and call new elections), he tried to resist, suggesting several other civilians instead. Lutsenko added simply that Yushchenko saw no need to replace him.

5. (SBU) Mentioning that he had met August 3 with Regions' financier Akhmetov at the latter's request, and subsequently with Yanukovych, Lutsenko said he had told Yanukovych that he would resign if he were barred from carrying out the current reform efforts, was undermined, or given unlawful orders to implement. He said he told Yanukovych that he would submit a letter of resignation to Yushchenko August 4 but, if asked to stay, would insist on continuing current policy and personnel issues.

6. (SBU) Myhailo Prytula, Lutsenko's aide during the Orange

KIEV 00003130 002 OF 003

Revolution, told us August 8 that the situation was more nuanced. Lutsenko indeed went to the Presidential Secretariat August 4 with a letter of resignation in hand to

SIPDIS

tell Yushchenko he would not serve under Yanukovych, but was left waiting six hours and ultimately denied the chance to meet Yushchenko face to face. Instead, Our Ukraine Party Leader Roman Bezsmertny emerged and told Lutsenko that he had no choice; Yushchenko had already made his decision to reappoint Lutsenko and would not review it. According to Prytula, when Lutsenko met Yanukovych and Akhmetov August 3, they asked Lutsenko to make some personnel changes in eastern Ukraine (Interior and police); Lutsenko refused, but agreed to "give up" control over naming the First Deputy Interior

Minister.

Peaceful Coexistence, "like Brezhnev and Reagan"?  
-----

7. (SBU) In his August 11 press conference, Lutsenko pulled few punches, promising to continue to be outspoken on high-profile issues. The 40 year old Lutsenko, barely out of university when the Soviet Union fell, evoked the era of Brezhnev and Reagan in likening the blue-orange accommodation in the Yanukovich cabinet to "peaceful coexistence of two systems." Lutsenko revealed that the group of ministers appointed to the Cabinet on Yushchenko's quota, largely from Our Ukraine with the exception of Lutsenko and Defense Minister Hrytsenko, had held an organizational meeting, adding: "we share common democratic values, and such a group, formal or informal, will exist."

8. (SBU) Lutsenko stated that he personally was mostly concerned about the return of odious persons from the past "whose criminal cases are at the Prosecutor's" and who had fled prosecution for refuge abroad, recommending that "they stay where they are" (note: largely in Russia). Lutsenko said that, while Yanukovich's two youthful convictions (for theft and assault) were not important after Yanukovich's appointment as PM, he had told Yanukovich August 3 that his position on the illegal annulment of Yanukovich's convictions by a Donetsk court had not changed. He claimed he had also told Yanukovich that he would pursue any politician, regardless of political affiliation, if there was evidence they had committed a crime, and that Yanukovich had replied that anyone who stole private or state property should be held accountable before the law.

Hrytsenko uneasy too...battle on NATO policy?  
-----

9. (C) Lutsenko is not the first "orange" minister to express public ambivalence about serving under Yanukovich and threaten resignation if things turned sour. Justice Minister Zvarych made similar comments August 5 after his appointment to the same job he held in the Tymoshenko government (February - September 2005). Similarly, Defense Minister Hrytsenko told visiting EUR DAS Kramer and Ambassador July 28 that he would not continue to serve if the Defense Ministry and the military were not adequately funded and there was not an open prospect for improved relations with NATO, including a MAP (reftel). His long-time associate and First Deputy Minister Polyakov shared his similar ambivalence about serving under Yanukovich with us August 6.

10. (SBU) PM Yanukovich's office appeared to justify their concerns and throw a wrench into renewed Ukrainian efforts to obtain a MAP by the NATO Riga summit in November late August

10. Wire stories, quoting an apparent statement issued by the Cabinet press service in the aftermath of Yanukovich's press conference but which had not appeared on any website (Cabinet of Ministers, Party of Regions, or Yanukovich's personal site) by late August 11, claimed that the GOU would refrain from "immediately applying for membership in NATO" in favor of continuing annual action plans, the intensified dialogue, and implementing necessary reforms. With Yanukovich traveling to Crimea August 11, it was difficult to obtain any authoritative clarification. Yanukovich's chief of staff Vasyl Demchyshyn initially told us that the media reports must have overstated the situation; Yanukovich would not have made such a categorical statement.

11. (SBU) However, Yanukovych's recently appointed foreign policy adviser Anatoliy Orel, who freely admitted to us August 11 that he had not attended Yanukovych's press conference and did not know what Yanukovych had said, went into detail about the statement cited in wire stories. The statement did not violate the text of the Universal (Declaration on National Unity), claimed Orel; Point 27 discussed cooperation with NATO and deciding on accession after a referendum. Orel claimed that since MAP application

KIEV 00003130 003 OF 003

constituted an application for membership, and Ukraine could not signal an intent to make an accession decision until after a referendum, it was not worth risking the government's stability immediately after its formation. Unlike other parties, Regions had never radically opposed cooperation with NATO; it would support continued cooperation to show the benefits of close relations. In the meantime, however, they would postpone the MAP application, work on specific projects with NATO to show people the practical benefits of cooperation, and work on public education efforts.

12. (C) Comment: While Orel's approach has its own internal logic if taken at face value, the uncoordinated statement immediately after Yanukovych himself said nothing about NATO in an extensive press conference raises the question of foreign policy coordination between the PM's office, the President's office, and the affected ministries, apart from any ulterior motives people like Orel may have. MFA Acting Director General for the US and Europe Serhiy Kyslytsya warned us August 9 that Yanukovych's advisers would be looking for ways to undermine Yushchenko's pro-Western ministers like Tarasyuk and Hrytsenko in the eyes of Yanukovych, shaping the latter's perceptions through informal memos and suggested talking points. Kyslytsya echoed the concerns voiced by politicians and commentators alike that Regions might start targeting Yushchenko-affiliated ministers towards the end of 2006, citing poor performance as a reason for removal via a simple majority vote in the Rada. This fear is balanced for now by Lutsenko's ambivalent optimism that "peaceful coexistence" can indeed be maintained between orange and blue.

13. (U) Visit Embassy Kiev's classified website at:  
[www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev](http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev).  
Gwaltney

Website pages

