

STATEMENT  
by Oleh Shamshur  
Ambassador of Ukraine to the United States of America  
at the briefing “Ukrainian Elections: Implications for Ukraine’s Future Direction”

*(House of Representatives, 25 October 2007)*

Dear Ambassador Miller,  
Dear Stephen Nix,  
Members of congressional staff,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank you for your attention to the latest political developments in Ukraine.

The September 30 election constituted an important step on the road of further consolidation of Ukraine’s democratic institutions and procedures. Let me use this opportunity to thank those Americans who were the part of the international monitoring effort.

Let me also extend my gratitude to the honorable co-chairs of the OSCE commission Alcee Hastings and Ben Cardin for organizing this briefing. Commission has earned a solid reputation of the champion of liberty and human rights at the international stage. We highly appreciate the level of our co-operation with the Commission and US Congress.

This electoral campaign in Ukraine, which officially commenced on August 2, was a brief one, yet one of the most intense in Ukraine’s newest history. 41 parties, partly united in blocs, participated in the elections. 9000 people running on the party lists were competing for 450 seats in the parliament. According to the Ukraine’s electoral system, these 450 seats are to be divided among all parties that overcame a 3% threshold.

International community was watching the election run-up with an utmost attention. Despite some initial concerns the general assessment was that for the second time within 1.5 years Ukraine succeeded avoiding most of the electoral pitfalls. There was no harassment of the political opponents, no media oppression, no “creative counting” or use of the forged absentee ballots. The notorious “administrative resource” - meaning the blunt intrusion into electoral process by the state officials – found its final rest in the dustbin of Ukrainian history. Ukraine has once again confirmed its democratic credentials, thus proving irreversibility of the democratic change spurred by the Orange revolution.

On the Election Day 63% of the registered voters came to the polling stations (Ukrainian law requires a 50%+1 turnout for an election to be valid). There were some reports on incomplete voter lists and other procedural malfunctions, but aside from that, the international observers didn’t register any systemic violations. Ukraine was commended for making another important step along the way of democratic reforms. The

United States, the European Union and other countries congratulated President Yushchenko and Ukrainian people on holding a free and transparent election. Chairman Hastings stated that *“the conduct of these elections was a testament to the Ukrainian people's determined path towards the consolidation of democracy as Ukraine advances its integration with the Euro-Atlantic community. As such, Ukraine serves as a model for the post-Soviet countries”*.

On October 17 the Central Electoral Commission announced the final results: 34.37% of votes for the Party of the Regions (175 seats), 30.71% for Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc (156 seats), 14.15% for the “Our Ukraine – People’s Self-Defense” Bloc (72 seats), 5.39% for the Communist Party (27 seats) and 3.96% for the Lytvyn Bloc (20 seats). This result meant a narrow win for two electoral blocs associated with the Orange revolution: Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc and “Our Ukraine –People’s Self-Defense” bloc, who took 228 seats out of 450.

On the same day leaders of the Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc and “Our Ukraine – National Self-Defense” signed a coalition agreement defining its main objectives and priorities. One of the key points of coalition agreement is further development of the strategic partnership with the United States. The document declares NATO and EU membership as Ukraine’s imperative goals.

For the second time in a row we held a free and transparent election. One should acknowledge an instrumental role played by President Yushchenko deeply committed to the democratic transformation of this country.

Once the polling stations were closed he called upon political parties to put aside their ideological differences and to start working on country’s consolidation around national priorities.

They include:

First, adopting a comprehensive program of country’s economic development, curbing inflation, stabilizing and optimizing incomes, creating a new quality of the social security.

Second, lifting the legal immunity on the members of the parliament. The general perception in Ukraine is that abolishing the immunity would bring about a major shift in the *modus operandi* of Ukrainian politics and make our political system more transparent and efficient.

Third, elaboration and approval of the FY2008 budget that would include President’s social initiatives.

Fourth, adoption of the package of anti-corruption legislation, create a National Anti-Corruption Bureau.

Fifth, enhancing energy security of Ukraine.

President stressed that the primary cause of the 2007 political crisis in Ukraine was the poorly devised constitutional reform of 2004. He asked the parliament to support

his efforts in amending the existing Constitution in a way that would prevent similar political deadlocks in the future.

Yesterday the President announced that he expects “Our Ukraine – People’s Self-Defense” and Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc to form a coalition government earlier in November.

Let me conclude by this: I’m proud that once again we are assessing Ukrainian election almost exclusively in positive terms. September 30 showed that political processes in Ukraine are further developing in a manner that solidly anchors this country in a community of countries with shared democratic values. This also augurs extremely well for the strengthening of the Ukrainian-American strategic partnership.