

UKRAINE'S PIVOTAL PARLIAMENTARY POLL



NOVEMBER 14, 2014

**Briefing of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

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The OSCE Secretariat is in Vienna, Austria, where weekly meetings of the participating States' permanent representatives are held. In addition, specialized seminars and meetings are convened in various locations. Periodic consultations are held among Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State or Government.

Although the OSCE continues to engage in standard setting in the fields of military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns, the Organization is primarily focused on initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States. The Organization deploys numerous missions and field activities located in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The website of the OSCE is: <www.osce.org>.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, is a U.S. Government agency created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance by the participating States with their OSCE commitments, with a particular emphasis on human rights.

The Commission consists of nine members from the United States Senate, nine members from the House of Representatives, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce. The positions of Chair and Co-Chair rotate between the Senate and House every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Commission gathers and disseminates relevant information to the U.S. Congress and the public by convening hearings, issuing reports that reflect the views of Members of the Commission and/or its staff, and providing details about the activities of the Helsinki process and developments in OSCE participating States.

The Commission also contributes to the formulation and execution of U.S. policy regarding the OSCE, including through Member and staff participation on U.S. Delegations to OSCE meetings. Members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and private individuals from participating States. The website of the Commission is: <www.csce.gov>.

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November 14, 2014

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Washington, DC

The briefing was held from 2:00 to 3:27 p.m. EST in 608 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington D.C., Congressman Michael Burgess, presiding.

Mr. BURGESS. Very well. I would like to welcome everyone here today. My name is Michael Burgess. I'm a member of Congress from the state of Texas, just a little bit north of Fort Worth. I do want to welcome everyone to today's Helsinki Commission briefing assessing the October 26th Ukrainian parliamentary elections. We're so pleased and honored to have with us four distinguished panelists, all seasoned experts with long years of experience working with Ukraine.

One often hears such terms as historic or milestone or critical to describe various elections. Sometimes, arguably, these are exaggerations. Not this time. This is truly a crucial moment for the future of the Ukraine. Not only does Ukraine face its most serious external threat since its independence, but it also faces significant internal challenges—overcoming the institutional corruption which has so debilitated the country, reforming the system of governance, getting the economy back on track and tacking the dire humanitarian situation resulting from the war and other challenges.

The encouraging news is that the election of the most pro-Western Rada in Ukraine's history leaves no doubt that the Ukrainian people want changes and a greater connection to Europe. It is a mandate for economic reform and an end to pervasive corruption and a determination to resist the aggression from Russia. In short, Ukrainians want to live a united, independent, stable and prosperous democracy. While there is no doubt that the war in the Donbass complicates the reform efforts, Russia's aggression has made the Ukraine more united and more democratic and, ironically, more pro-Western. The election results affirm that.

With these elections, Ukraine has its best chance since independence to consolidate its democracy. It is vital for the new government and Rada to seize the moment. Indeed, this election was remarkable. Like the election in May that saw the ascension of President Poroshenko, I was a Helsinki Commission observer at both. As such, I'd like to share with you some observations. The OSCE and others in the international community have assessed positively. It was held in accordance with international norms and upheld Ukraine's democratic commitments to its citizens. It was well-organized, it was transparent and it was peaceful.

Clearly, these early elections were a marked improvement over the last parliamentary elections in October 2012. We saw no problems in any of the polling places we visited. The polling process was conducted calmly and efficiently. This assessment was shared overwhelmingly by other international observers. This is not to say that elections were problem free. They never are. It doesn't mean that there's not room for improvement, because there always is. I'm sure our panelists will address these problem areas and, in their assessment, what needs to be accomplished.

As a Congress it is clear as an institution that we stand in solidarity with Ukraine. Time and again we have passed funding and aid packages for Ukraine. However, considering the consistent aggression and the utter lack of regard for any nominal peace agreement that Russia has shown towards the people of Ukraine, frankly, Ukraine needs more than just funding. Ukraine needs weapons, ammunition, body armor and communications equipment. President Poroshenko came before the United States Congress and addressed a joint session of the United States Congress last September.

He has met with President Obama. Although President Obama has yet to heed the requests of the people of the Ukraine, I have introduced legislation that does just that. H.R. 53-15 creates a lend-lease program that authorizes the president of the United States to transfer certain military equipment to the Ukraine. While aid and funding is certainly necessary, weapons and munitions are just as important to repel the pro-Russian forces that are invading a sovereign nation.

Given my interest in the subject, I am pleased to be leading this panel of experts today. But because of travel constraints, I'm unfortunately not able to stay with you. But I will defer to the Helsinki Commission staff for the panel's introduction.

Orest.

Mr. DEYCHAKIWSKY. Thank you very much, Dr. Burgess. I must say, it was a real pleasure to have the opportunity to be an election observer with you in Kyiv, Kaniv and points in between. I'll go right straight to the introductions. Thank you very much.

I'll introduce our panel in order of appearance. First is Olha Aivazovska. Olha studied at the Cherkasy National University's faculty of the Ukrainian language in journalism. She was the head of the Cherkasy Oblast civic group PORA and was the head of the Cherkasy OPORA. She also served as the PR manager of OPORA. Since 2007, she's been the editor and chief of the Tochka OPORY newspaper. In 2009, she was elected the chair of the board of OPORA. Under Olha's leadership, OPORA has monitored the campaign period and election day and conducted parallel vote tabulations in Ukrainian nationwide elections in 2010, 2012 and 2014. After Olha, Katie Fox will speak. Katie oversees NDI's programs in Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and Russia. Katie began her career with NDI in 1995 as a Kyiv-based manager of civic and electoral program for NDI. She's since traveled and trained extensively for NDI throughout the former Soviet Union. A lawyer by training, Katie was a lobbyist for a public employees union, a community organizer and legislative staff in several congressional offices prior to joining NDI.

Stephen Nix joined IRI in October 2000 as regional program director for Eurasia. In that position, he oversees programs in Belarus, Georgia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Moldova and Ukraine. Steve joined IRI after serving for two years as senior democracy specialist at the U.S. Agency for International Development. He is a specialist in political party development and judicial and legal reform in the former Soviet Union and lived in Ukraine when, I believe, he was working for IFES for several years in the 1990s.

Gavin Weise is deputy director for Europe and Asia at IFES, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, managing IFES' portfolio of election assistance programs in countries of Southeastern European and the former Soviet Union. He's worked for over a decade in elections in democratic transition programs in Ukraine. He's led a number of assessments of electoral processes and legal frameworks in Ukraine and other countries in the region, and previously he was the regional director for Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus at the Eurasia Foundation, based in Kiev.

So without further delay, let's proceed. Olha, the floor is yours.

Ms. AIVAZOVSKA. Thank you very much. I want to show you a short presentation about these elections and our results as an organization who observed very well during this process. We had 213 long term observers during all campaign, and 2000 short-term observers on election day and after election day in district election commissions.

A short presentation about candidates and about campaigns. I think we've had a great progress about some positions. Firstly, our candidates—we had more candidates in 2012, and we had less numbers of technical parties during this campaign. For example, in 2012, our technical parties near 81 during all elections, registered candidates in single-member districts. But this process was only about the seats in electoral commissions, different levels as districts and as election commissions. That's why this last position is better for Ukrainian election than in previous regular election in 2012.

We had progress with women in elections, especially in political parties' lists. For example, in 2012, we had near 20 percent of women in political parties list now, more than 26. Then our candidates were much more younger than in previous period. 32 percent of candidates were younger than 35 years. It's good for Ukraine, because many young people were very active during this revolution, and after revolution period, as NGO, as journalist and so on. That's why this election is like mirror of all political process in Ukraine, and our candidates had a good education. More than 92 percent had higher education. That is good. I want to show you a few slides about nonparty candidates in party lists. We think that it is a problem for Ukrainian politics and politicians, because many of candidates in party list was nonparty candidates. That means that in the future parliament, we don't know how they will work with their political fraction, with their parties and with other fractions, because they don't have any communication, cooperation and history with these parties. It's like political projects, only during one election and nothing else.

Formerly, we elected new parties in parliament are very new as a political structure, but unfortunately, this partly mostly are political projects only for one elections. For examples, such parties as opposition blocs had 98 percent nonparty members in their party lists. For example, such party as communist party had such position only for 1 percent. Svoboda National Democratic Party, in their list, had zero members of these political parties.

We analyzed such numbers for all party lists, and I can speak about some of them, especially that—who were elected after this election. For example, such party as Samopomich had 73 percent nonparty candidates in their list. Bloc Petro Poroshenko had 67 percent of nonparty candidates in their list. Such party as Strong Ukraine or others, less than 30 percent nonparty candidates. We think that it is a problem of Ukraine now that our political parties are not so capacity, strength, organization as we need for our parliament.

That's why all international organization—Ukrainian nongovernmental organization should push them to be more party as political projects. I don't like to tell about violations after elections, because it's like a story, but we should analyze some information to understand what we will do, what we are going to do to change this situation.

For example, these numbers is about violations which were—which were observed by our observers during all of these period. Four hundred violations—it's about agitation, information, black PR in electoral campaign—193 is about voter bribing. Unfortunately, in Ukraine, we have very high position of corruption and political corruption, too, and it is a story not only about parties or candidates. It's a story about voters, unfortunately, too. That's why these numbers are very strong gap for our elections.

Then we can compare this part of problems with 2012, and I want to show you these numbers. For example, in 2012, we observed and had 457 cases about abuse of administrative resource. Unfortunately, this problem was very influence for our campaign and for results in 2012. At the second stage was voter bribing—you had 363 cases, and it was a big problem, especially in single-mandate district as 2014, but we had less numbers of such cases; 302 cases in 2012 was about criminal interference in electoral process. Now we had such problem—procedural violations on the sought position, and I can say that this comparison between 2012 and 2014 are very good picture for us, because, unfortunately, we had many violations, but this violation was not so strong for results after election campaign and for the voters as 2012.

About election days: We had many violations, but this number are less than in 2012, and as you see, the top position is about attempts to issue ballots without checking the passport for less than 4 percent from all polling station in Ukraine, and so on. If you are talking about voting counting, unfortunately, it is a problem in Ukraine, because we had such story as 2004, for example, presidential election, when, after vote and counting, we had another result than after voting of citizens. We can share with you such information about violations. So the main—the main result of our observing is about the single-mandate ballots were worse counted than in the national district.

I'm talking about problem of electoral system in Ukraine, when we have so many cases about political corruption, and unfortunately, with these single-mandate districts, our politicians couldn't be better than without this corruption system. If you are talking about turnout, unfortunately, many politicians, especially abroad from Russian Federation, too, from pro-Russian political groups, said that turnout in Ukraine was less than ever in our history. Yes, of course, it was less, but not so much, because we compare this turnout with the previous election—for example, in 2006, 2010, we have—we had 58 and 57 percent of turnout—in 2012, it was 57, so we had less turnout, but you know that there is a war in Ukraine. That's why, in some territory, people unfortunately couldn't vote, even near their house were open polling stations.

For example, in Luhansk Oblast, Rubizhne, district number 112, terrorist sent people—they distribute special letters that if you will go to the polling station, we will shot you. That's why many people don't go to vote, because they afraid about their lives. Our results of PVT organization work not only about quantitative—qualitative analysis of this election, but with quantitative too. That's why we organize PVT—parallel vote tabulation with special—with special—OK—we organize PVT, and here is the results of our PVT.

For example, light blue is our results of PVT, which were publicized on Monday, 27th of October, and dark blue, it's about CEC results—official results, which were published

on this week in Ukraine. The third column, it's about results—one of the exit polls. Unfortunately, we had many exit polls, but their results wasn't correct, especially for such parties—People's Party, for such party as Bloc Petro Poroshenko because all of the exit polls showed that the first position was by Petro Poroshenko, not People's Front. The main mistake was about such party as Svoboda, because all of exit polls showed that they get results more than 5 percent, but unfortunately it wasn't true.

That's why our PVT was so strong because political example of results because we think that with PVT, many parties, especially pro-Russian politicians, wanted to say that results was falsificated, but it isn't true because results was correct, especially official results, but exit polls didn't show us—for us real results because margin of error is too high compared with PVT. For example, margin of error for Svoboda was 0.2 in our research. They don't get 5 percent, unfortunately.

If you are talking about visualization or some information about results, we prepared special online map when everybody made to see results per each district about turnout, about results or political parties and about results of candidates in single-mandate districts. For example, it's results of People Front, and you can understand where their voters live and what part of Ukraine prefer to give more votes for this political parties. It's about luck of Petro Poroshenko. It's about Samopovich. It's about Opposition Bloc where there were many, many politicians from Party of Region as a party close to Viktor Yanukovych, and you very well can see that it is eastern Ukrainian party. About Radical Party of Oleh Lyashko and Batkivshchyna.

Thank you.

Mr. DEYCHAKIWSKY. Thank you very much, Olha.

Katie, please.

Ms. FOX. Thank you very much, Orest, for the opportunity to speak here today, and David, thank you. OK.

The National Democratic Institute, which I represent, also monitored the recent elections. We were very pleased also to assist OPORA in conducting their PVT as well as to help the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations, which is a network of the groups like OPORA in the countries of Eastern Europe. NDI's delegation to the election said, quote, Ukraine's October 26 parliamentary elections marked a major achievement for a country fighting foreign—facing fighting and foreign intervention. For the second time in less than six months, the Ukrainian people have conducted elections that meet international democratic standards in spite of the Russian occupation of Crimean and Russian-backed separatist conflicts in the east. I want to pause a minute on this point on foreign intervention because it's even truer today with Russian troops again marching into Ukraine. The war is not the subject of today's briefing, but it is very difficult to talk about Ukraine and about elections and democracy without mentioning it.

At stake is not only a fighting chance for a democratic government in a very tough neighborhood but Russia's ability to unilaterally redraw foreign borders through aggression. Ukraine's struggle should be of concern, therefore, of all of us. I was very happy and appreciative to hear Congressman Burgess' supportive remarks and also for support from other corners of the U.S. government.

NDI's monitoring delegation further concluded that the electoral process involved some shortcomings but that none appeared to undermine electoral credibility. As Olga has told you in greater detail, there were problems in the legal framework, sporadic inci-

dents of violence, intimidation and attempts to disrupt voting, some voter bribery and smear campaigns in the media as well as insufficient promotion of women and inadequate regulation of campaign finance. But these issues were less pervasive than in the 2012 parliamentary elections. Very important, it did not appear to be centrally orchestrated or directed against a particular political target.

There was, as the invitation to this event noted, some disenfranchisement for voters. I want to elaborate a little bit on that because it's very important to note the source here of voter—the source of the voter disenfranchisement. In most cases where NDI monitors elections, the source is political contestants or authorities themselves. In this case, voters in Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk were disenfranchised because of the actions of foreign forces and armed groups allied with them.

This does not delegitimize the parliamentary elections. In fact, officials are making every effort to conduct democratic elections, and there's—the actions of these armed groups does not undermine that effort. We can also point to cases in Cyprus, Moldova and Georgia recently where the central government has lost control over some of its territories, which has led to disenfranchisement, and in those of voters. In that case—in those cases, no one questioned the legitimacy of those elections. The same is true in Ukraine.

Turning for a minute to the challenges ahead for the new parliament and the government as a whole in Ukraine: Although Ukrainians are divided on many things, they are certainly united, wanting an end to the old Yanukovych-style corruption, and they gave in these elections a reasonably strong mandate to reformers in the new parliament to end that corruption. Moreover, it appears that Ukraine's leaders, including President Poroshenko and Prime Minister Yatsenyuk, have heeded the lessons of the Orange Revolution, and they understand that democrats need to work together.

Despite all of this, what our office is hearing on the ground is that the negotiations which are going on now to form a governing majority coalition in the parliament are very difficult. It's very difficult for the five parties, five reform-oriented parties, to reach agreement. There are fissures within the parties themselves. For example, UDAR and bloc of Poroshenko are going to contest local elections separately after running together presidential. The new party Volia is splintering, which is creating fissures within the new Samopomich faction, of which it's a part. By the way, the people who we've spoken to in the Opposition Bloc say that they are equally disorganized. They can't even really decide what to call themselves. They of course have even more trouble setting out a common vision.

Once a government is formed, it's going to be very, very hard to exercise the discipline that will be necessary to pass difficult reforms. As Olga has pointed out, many of the people who were elected feel little loyalty to the party lists in which they were elected. They are a disparate election of battalion commanders, journalists, NGO leaders and more traditional long-serving politicians. They came to parliament for different reasons, they have different external constituencies, and divisions are inevitable, especially when they have to confront very controversial issues, such as decentralization, lustration, deciding how lustration is implemented and who loses their job, deciding how decentralization goes and who—where power ends out at the local level. These are hard issues, not to mention economic collapse and fighting a war.

In these conditions, it would be very difficult for any democratically elected parliament, including, I'm sure, our own Congress, to meet citizens' expectations for sweeping

reforms quickly implemented. However, what the Ukrainian government can do is to try to retain the patience and confidence of citizens in this reform process by bringing them into it, by making them partners in the process, as long as—as long and difficult as that process may be. This will require a lot of creativity, a lot of effort to set up mechanisms for public discussion and consultation, to really reach deep.

The challenge is to give impatient and alienated citizens a sense, as I said, that they are partners, or at least that they're being heard in the reform process that's being driven by the central government. This will require going beyond what's called the grass tops, the leaders of civic organizations, to get to those Ukrainians who are either not active in politics or the groups that are just taking reform process into their own hands, the mobs who are conducting what's called people's lustration, where they confront officials they believe are corrupt and force them to sign resignation letters and sometimes toss them into dumpsters. Armed groups who've threatened that if reform doesn't go well, they may come back with their arms to the Maidan, these people too need to feel a stake in the reform process.

I want to just quickly share with you, in the interests of trying to understand what would attract Ukrainians, particularly in the south and east, into peaceful civic activism and support of reform, NDI has helped a coalition of civic groups to conduct some public opinion polling recently. This is a coalition called For Peaceful Protest. It's a group that has been very instrumental in helping to protect the freedom of assembly in Ukraine, including during the Euromaidan demonstrations. After the "revolution of dignity," they wanted to see what would motivate people, especially southern and eastern citizens, to get involved in more everyday business of politics beyond protest.

So they conducted polls and focus groups in Poltava, Sumy, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhyya, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Odessa. I'm not going to go over in much detail, but one of the most interesting findings from this poll was the way that people viewed civic activism. A solid majority of the respondents believe that in Ukraine, people get involved in civic activism to do good, to change the world for the better or to protect someone's rights. This is a departure from past polls in which most people have much more cynically seen civic activism, civic organizing as something people may do for their own personal benefit or advancement.

In addition, there are a lot more specific findings in the poll about the particular issues—in the focus group—that—particular issues that would motivate people to get involved and the way they need to be approached, the need for organizers and so forth. We're still sort of sorting that out, and I'm not going to go into it, but I think the overall picture is of a citizenry that wants to participate and that has energy and enthusiasm and wants to participate in constructive ways to the reform process. In the future, NDI will be working with this group, For Peaceful Protest, as well as with other NGOs to channel desire for reforms into civic activism.

We'll also be very proud to share our global experience OPORA as they renew their project on parliamentary monitoring and watchdogging the new parliament, which you may want to ask Olha about in the questions. NDI along with IRI will also be flagging assistance to parties and parliamentarians. I'd like to just conclude my presentation, again, with a reminder of the urgent need for all of us to help Ukraine, for the international community to support Ukraine in every way, in every form at this crucial junc-

ture. Ukraine's response to the challenges it now faces will certainly have reverberations far beyond its own borders.

Thank you very much.

Mr. DEYCHAKIWSKY. Thanks, Katie, for your insights. I particularly found interesting that poll on civic activism where there is a transition being made from working for one's personal benefit to doing good, and that truly could be a game-changer. Thanks again.

Steve.

Mr. NIX. First of all, thank you to the members of the commission for convening this hearing today. Ukraine and Eurasia remain of great strategic importance to the United States, in particular at this time when Ukrainian people and their newly elected leadership face tremendous and unprecedented challenges. This briefing is both timely, and it's necessary. My thanks go out to you, David and Orest, for hosting this. I request that my written statement be entered into the record.

On October 26th, millions of Ukrainians went to the polls to elect a new government, a government that would focus on implementing long-term reforms, and secondly, to respond to Russian aggression. An overwhelming majority of Ukrainians were able to vote, despite the fact that fighting continued in eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea made it virtually impossible for Crimean citizens to vote in this election. Ukrainians turned out to support the journey to Europe, a journey that had started on the Maidan and now continues.

The International Republican Institute fielded an international election observation team. IRI has observed every national election that has taken place since Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union. Observers have visited more than 150 polling stations in various oblasts. We are also very pleased to note that IRI observers were able to get into the contested area of Donestk, and we were actually able to observe voting that took place in the town of Slaviansk, a town that as many of you recall was the subject of intense fighting and only had recently been retaken by the Ukrainian government and is currently over—under Ukrainian control.

Our mission found that the elections were well administered. We found that polling officials were professional and organized throughout the process. Our observers reported only minor, nonsystemic problems, technicalities, none of which would have affected the outcome of this election. We applaud the way that this election was administered, and we applaud the many election commission members who took part in this, many under very difficult conditions.

These elections illustrate Ukrainians' resounding choice to continued European integration. The vast majority of members of parliament who have been elected represent a pro-European choice. President Poroshenko importantly will now have a working coalition to support him in his efforts for reform and further integration into Europe.

But despite the successful elections, Ukraine faces many significant challenges. First and foremost, the threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity by its Russian neighbor. Russian and Russian-backed militants have chosen to ignore the Minsk peace accord. They continually seek to seize additional territory in eastern Ukraine. They've launched daily attacks on Ukrainian positions and checkpoints, including the strategically important airport in Donetsk. Recently militants have launched an offensive along the Azov Sea, threatening the city of Mariupol. More than 100 Ukrainian servicemen have lost their lives since the so-called Minsk peace agreement was signed.

With much attention focused on the conflict of eastern Ukraine, Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea has often been overlooked by the international community. Since the annexation, conditions on the peninsula have only worsened. They've gotten worse for supporters of Ukrainian unity and especially for the Crimean Tatars. Crimean residents have been forced to renounce their Ukrainian citizenship in favor of Russian citizenship. In the last few months Crimean Tatars have become the target of Russian prosecution. According to Mustafa Dzhemilev, who's the leader of the Crimean Tatars, 18 Tatars are missing, many kidnapped in broad daylight. Tatars have been—have had their homes illegally searched, property confiscated, their centers and places of worship raided and seized. Numerous criminal cases have been opened against Tatar political leadership.

These threats to Ukraine's territory and its people are real, and the international community should support President Poroshenko in his efforts to resolve these issues. Ukraine will not be able to pursue the reforms needed to move closer to Europe while its territory is under siege by foreign actors. A peaceful and whole Ukraine is of paramount strategic importance and must be a priority for the West.

IRI nationwide polling in Ukraine confirms very simple facts. First and foremost, Ukrainians want peace. They also want anti-corruption efforts, and they want economic reform, jobs. These are the key issues. They continue to be key issues for the past six months. The government has to seize the opportunity to undertake wide-ranging economic and judicial reforms. The economy is teetering on the verge of collapse. This is only exacerbated by the Russian ban on Ukrainian imports.

As Ukraine braces for gas shortages ahead of what might be a long winter, Ukrainian economy shows little signs of improvement, with the hryvnia hitting a record low. The months ahead are likely to be very difficult for the Ukrainian people.

Europe and the United States cannot allow the Ukrainian government to face these challenges alone. The West should provide the president and parliament with the economic, technical and other assistance to ensure that Ukraine realizes its aspirations in the face of overt Russian aggression.

At IRI, we're working to help Ukrainian people and government consolidate democracy. While Ukraine's future is obviously up to Ukrainians, we believe that the community of Western democracies can play a role in providing the tools and assistance that can help Ukraine continue along its democratic path. IRI will continue to provide survey data on key issues to parliament and the executive branch to assist the president, prime minister and members of parliament in framing legislative and ministerial reform agendas. We will also continue our regional governance work to respond to the need for knowledge and skills as Ukraine addresses the issue of decentralization and radically reform their local government.

IRI will soon open an office and training center in the city of Dnipropetrovsk, where we will focus on efforts on locally elected officials, providing them training and expertise. We'll also be bringing eastern elected officials to cities in Western Ukraine, and vice versa. We hope in doing so we cannot only increase their level of expertise but build the unity that President Poroshenko and others acknowledge are necessary for Ukraine to continue its path to Europe.

Although Russian propaganda would have us believe that Ukrainians are divided and engaged in a bitter civil war, Ukrainians have never been more united than now. IRI also recognizes that more must be done to promote and enhance these linkages be-

tween Ukrainians. In sum, Ukraine will always have a special relationship with Russia and its people, with its language, its culture and historical ties. But through the Maidan and now the May and October elections, the people have spoken very loudly. Ukrainians of all backgrounds, ages and faiths have said that they want to decide their own future, a future with greater freedom, greater democracy and closer ties to Europe. It is at this critical time in Ukraine's further democratic development that the West must stand with our Ukrainian friends and do all we can to support them in their efforts to further consolidate democratic processes throughout their country.

Thank you, and I'll be happy to take any questions at the end of the testimony.

Mr. DEYCHAKIWSKY. Thanks, Stephen. In particular, thanks for emphasizing Crimea. It's easy to forget Crimea these days because the focus on Dohensk and Luhansk—the war in eastern Donbass, but it's important not to forget Crimea, including the plight of the Crimean Tatars.

Gavin.

Mr. WEISE. Thank you, Orest. Thank you, everyone, for coming in today. I'm not sure what else there is to be said after following these very distinguished and thorough presentations, but I will do my best. As you have heard today, the early parliamentary elections were regarded as successful by domestic and international observers alike, and I will not go into the many reasons why, but rather concur with this general assessment, and instead I'll summarize the elections from a different viewpoint, mainly—and something Katie, I think, touched on—is just addressing lingering concerns regarding the legitimacy of this election and the ensuing government; and second, the need for further support to still nascent political and electoral institutions of Ukraine.

As to whether the elections are legitimate when they're called early, when political forces are going through a period of rapid transformation and the country a period of active and even open armed conflict, I would offer just a few observations that are very similar to those that I offered to Prime Minister Yatsenyuk on the eve of the May 25 presidential poll, as we find ourselves in a similar situation. On the 26th of October poll, voters had 29 parties to choose from in the proportional list system, from the far left of the spectrum to the far right of the political spectrum, and more when we include candidates from the single-member districts. While many parties were small and even frivolous, there were approximately 10 different parties who in pre-election polls, in many different pre-election polls, showed that they had at least a reasonable chance to win seats in the new parliament. Arguably, Ukrainian voters have not had this number and variety of meaningful political options since, really, post-Soviet independence. The values, the platforms, the programs of political parties were accessible to the electorate, largely. Television in Ukraine is by far the most prevalent source of voter outreach and voter information. While access to that airtime is very dependent and actually too dependent, probably, or definitely, on the bank accounts of political parties and their patrons, the level of freedom of media in a post-Yanukovych Ukraine is sufficient enough to allow different voices on the political spectrum to be heard.

Ukraine should also be recognized for having now an efficient system of voter eligibility and registration. This was once heavily criticized by political parties and observers for the vulnerability that it provides to fraud or opens up to fraud, and now it is generally sound. Moreover, it's a system, very importantly, that could accommodate the registration of tens of thousands of citizens from Crimea and from Donbass that would enable them

to vote in their places of refuge. This is a right they might not have been afforded under a less-sophisticated system. The election authority, which is the Central Election Commission of Ukraine, together with other government agencies, succeeded in administering the vote on October 26th despite numerous threats, a smaller than usual elections budget and of course ongoing shelling, conflict, intimidation in certain parts of the country.

It's true, the elections didn't take place in several districts in eastern regions and in Crimea, as we've heard today. However, remember, this was a question of territorial control by the government in Kiev and not a lack of competency by the election administration, or importantly, an unwillingness to try. I say women because it is mostly women—and men who risked being a casualty of armed conflict, who faced harassment, intimidation and who still face this risk even today for their service in these past elections, should really be regarded as heroes. IFES has had the opportunity to work with many of these commissioners in the east, having had a number of staff and trainers work there in Donetsk, in Luhansk, in the weeks and months prior to the election.

There were some challenges to the results. As we speak, there are ongoing court-related recounts in two of the single member districts. But this is a basic feature of any functioning democracy, and overall there's been a general acceptance of the results by the public and political contestants alike.

There will be, as was already mentioned, several new forces and faces in the Verkhovna Rada. It includes not only the pro-Western European parties that will now work together to form a coalition, but it also includes representatives of the former Yanukovych party and it also includes representatives of the Euromaidan movement and also military and even paramilitary. So this may be quite a hodgepodge of individuals and factions in the parliament, but it's arguably the most diverse and representative parliament Ukraine's had to date. although it's still very low, as Olha mentioned earlier and showed us on the slide, it's the highest representation of women in Ukraine's legislature in the country's post-Soviet history.

There is no single definition or criteria that I could find or that I'm aware of for having legitimate elections, but I would posit that when you have political choice, you have access to information on candidates, you have enfranchisement of citizens, you have a functioning election administration and you have a general acceptance of the electoral outcome, you may—you have many, if not all, the characteristics of a legitimate election process.

Is there work to be done? Absolutely. There were at least 15 of the almost 200 single election constituencies where officials faced problems in coming up with results in a timely and transparent manner. They were problems inside and outside the polling station inherent in the system administration and political culture of Ukraine. The problems are cumbersome. Some procedures are cumbersome. Some polling station sizes are unwieldy for Ukraine's manual counting of ballots. Election workers get at most half a day of training. The majority get no training at all except which is provided by their peers. Access to voting for persons with disabilities remains fraught with difficulty due to the infrastructure and also cultural legacies of the country.

At some point next year, we'll have local elections. The challenge, as I mentioned, will undoubtedly surface again. In fact, local elections are, in my opinion and many others, by far the most complex for parties, election administration bodies and for the electorate, for the voters. The system of electing councils that in Ukraine's reality has proved to

hold open a door to fraud, abuse of administrative resource and vote-buying in the past could and really should be reviewed by Ukrainians to be certain that this really is the best system to represent their citizens.

Regarding the electoral administration—I could go on on this one for quite some time because it's the area where we work, but I won't—but the current system of appointing all of the commissioners via political party representatives and via lottery is clearly fraud. I'm not saying that it is the wrong system—and it may be the only viable possible system to have in Ukraine—but there are certain elements of that system which currently right now are being abused to the point of legalizing or making legal a form of fraud, which essentially is allowing parties to try and control and unduly influence electoral outcomes as opposed to exercising the right or exercising the role of a professional election administration.

Now, the role of money in politics continues to be perhaps the weakest point in Ukraine's—of Ukraine's elections. There is very little regulation of campaign finance and—period. Together, with Ukraine's civil society, IFES has drawn up draft legislation to improve transparency of election financing and they were supported by the major political groups in the previous parliament, including members of Batkivshchyna, Poroshenko, Klitschko's Party, et cetera. But they were not adopted prior to the parliament's dismissal. IFES and others remain hopeful that this will be taken up early in the new agenda. To restrict the oligarch's influence on political decision making, parliament also needs to really think seriously about things like direct annual public funding of political parties, limiting the value of private donations to parties, introducing proportionate effective dissuasive sanctions for violation of these rules. In many cases, there is no right or wrong method or answer to some of those questions, but they are questions that the new Rada should look at very seriously.

Friendly governments such as the U.S., and organizations such as those sitting up here today, are and should be and are ready, willing to support Ukraine in changing for the better. Such ills as I described here can be effectively remedied in the months and years to come. However, success in this process also requires political will on the part of Ukraine and I, for one, believe the will is there; more so now than perhaps it has ever been. In conclusion, or perhaps in lieu of a conclusion, I must mention that, of all these reforms and those regarding corruption, economy, administration of justice—the list goes on and on—they will need to be implemented in a time that—perhaps I've called it too lightly—of considerable uncertainty in Ukraine. Considerable being an understatement when citizens residing in certain towns, certain villages, even cities, don't know if they will even still be part of Ukraine in days or a week from now. In such a context, worrying about the future of these reforms seems a bit out of place. As such, in arguing for U.S. support and vigilance of the continued development for the political system and culture of Ukraine, I beseech this commission, the U.S. government, society as a whole in the U.S. to not neglect Ukraine in its darkest hour of need, when it faces the clearest threat to its continued viability as a state since it became independent 23 years ago. For a while, the soon to be constituted pro-European parliamentary majority gives Ukraine the opportunity to move beyond the status quo of an unsatisfactory governance that has beset the country these many years. Surely, we must also help Ukraine to preserve a different kind of status quo, that of its statehood and territorial integrity. Thank you.

Mr. DEYCHAKIWSKY. Thanks, Gavin, and believe me, this commission and all of the organizations here will continue to be very committed to supporting Ukraine—definitely won't abandon Ukraine. But thanks all of you for your comprehensive and complementary presentations.

I want to make a few comments before turning it over to the Q & A session. One is, in terms of how they were conducted, I observed the elections with Dr. Burgess for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly—the OSCE, of course, was the largest mission, at over 1,000 short term observers there, including close to 200 parliamentarians. I've observed elections in nine countries—several dozen elections—and these were just about the best I ever saw, based on the polling stations we observed. We didn't see problems—didn't even see irregularities, so either I'm losing my touch or they really, really were good. The vast majority of the OSCE observers also assessed the voting process and counting process quite positively.

The biggest negative in these elections—and this is underscoring points my colleagues here made, I think—obviously, there were areas that need improvement and Gavin and Olha and others touched upon those. This is a process, after all. But the biggest negative was clearly the inability of more than 10 percent of the population which was effectively disenfranchised given Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. But, as Katie said, that does not delegitimize these elections.

One thing I'd like to note is these elections stood in dramatically sharp contrast to the farcical so-called elections that were held just a week later, on November 2nd in the eastern Donbas, the areas controlled by the Russians and their illegal armed Russian proxy groups, or terrorists, as many have called them, I think appropriately. These elections—so-called elections—were held in flagrant breach of both Ukrainian law and of the Minsk ceasefire agreement. Clearly, Russian aggression has cast a dark cloud on Ukraine, tremendously complicating Ukraine's normal development, but reforms are still absolutely necessary, including combating the scourge of corruption. I hope that a coalition agreement is hammered out soon so that a new government and the Rada could work effectively to keep meeting Ukraine's many very serious internal challenges.

Before turning it over to Q & A from the audience, I'd like to introduce David Kostelancik, who will make a comment and ask the first question. David is a long time service officer. We're very happy to have him currently serving as senior adviser at the Helsinki Commission—senior State Department adviser at the Commission. Until August, right before joining us, Dave was the Director of Russian affairs at the State Department, so he has had a lot of experience with Ukraine, given the Russia—Ukraine crisis. I'll pass it over to you, Dave.

Mr. KOSTELANCIK. Thank you. Thank you, Orest. Thanks to everyone. Thanks to our guests for excellent presentations on the elections. Dr. Burgess and my colleague Orest have made some significant points regarding the elections in Ukraine but let me just make a short comment regarding Russia and the Russian government's manipulation of information, specifically in regard to its illegal activities in Ukraine. First, as attested by our witnesses today, the determination of the citizens of Ukraine to ensure that their country carries through on its commitments, including those in the Helsinki Final Act and other OSCE documents, contrast sharply with the failure of Russia to honor those same international obligations. The power of truth, sometimes neglected or downplayed or distorted

in a world awash with cynicism, has shone a spotlight on Moscow's transgressions in this part of the world. Manipulation of information by Russia in such a systematic manner intended not to educate, but only to corrode trust and confidence, flies in the face of what we've all committed to uphold through the OSCE. Today's opportunity to hear directly from people with firsthand experience during the recent Ukrainian elections is an even more vital piece of our support for the people of Ukraine and their democratic choices.

Secondly, as they assume the OSCE chairmanship, Swiss officials outlined three areas of focus promoting three major sets of values for 2014: security, by focusing on fostering enhanced security and stability in Europe; freedom, by improving people's lives; and responsibility, by strengthening the OSCE's ability to act. The Swiss leadership and, indeed, all of us who place trust and confidence in the OSCE have been sorely challenged to make progress in each of these areas by Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and by its ongoing violation of the norms and standards enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

With this short background, I'd like to toss out for consideration by our panel and by others in the audience: In light of these violations, in light of the pressure Moscow continues to apply, especially in attempting to cover up truths or distort realities of governance in Ukraine, how can the United States, together with the European Union, with other partners, help ensure that the democratic will manifested in these elections strengthens and deepens political participation in the future throughout Ukraine? That's been touched on to some extent in some presentations—Katie, Gavin, Steve, Olga—but I'd be very interested in hearing more from you about how we all can work together to carry this momentum forward.

Thank you.

Mr. NIX. Sure. Well, thank you for the question, David. There's no doubt that Russia propaganda has played a role, continues to play a critical role in shaping opinion, wrongfully, not just in Ukraine and in Eastern Ukraine, but in Europe and the West. I'm not sure at this point in time we can match what the Russian government is outlaying in terms of net dollars. They are—they have expended millions and millions into cable network television, print media, radio media. It's manifested by what you see in Russia today, which is now broadcasting in several languages and promoting a line of fabricated news that just doesn't represent the facts on the ground in Ukraine at all. It distorts opinion, has made it very difficult for this government.

The fact that Russia attempts to stand up in its media broadcasts for the rights of people in the East, when it ignores the human rights of its own people, its own country, to me is appalling. And I think, again, the continuing insulting line that we hear about the fascisti, the fascist nature of the current Ukrainian government, the name-calling, which, again, is just—not only is it regrettable, it's—what's the Ukrainian word—"brekhnya"—it's total lies. And the West has to figure out a way to counter this disinformation, not just in Ukraine but in Europe. It's happening all over.

Ms. AIVAZOVSKA. I'll try to answer, because my English is not so well, but when we are talking about freedom of speech, we should understand that this story isn't about Russia, and about Russian media, especially, that media who specialized on propaganda and so on. We heard such story when these occupations started on spring, when our governance tried to stop broadcasting of Russian TV, especially on the eastern part of Ukraine.

Then many foreign organizations, including OSCE, said it is not democracy if you stop to show these TV broadcasting in your territory. But nobody tried to monitor context from Russian news because, unfortunately, it isn't in use or analytical materials; it's really propaganda without any truth about Ukraine, without facts, without some fantastic stories from our territory and so on. That's why international organizations with good capacity and strength should try to monitor this information and publish truly results, reports about context from Russian propaganda. It will be the very small but the first step to stop the situation, especially in Europe and other countries when Russian TV channels, Russian journalists have good capacity and many money to promote their information on this territory.

Unfortunately, Ukraine is a poor country with war, and now a territory with financial crisis and so on. That's why this should—a small help from international organizations will be very useful for us. I'm talking about monitoring and about very good reports, good—I'm talking about systematic and strength reports about Russian propaganda and Russian media, which will be helpful for all of us.

Mr. WEISE. Can I take that as well? I just would agree, you know, with Steve and Olga about that. The information wars are one of the critical problems, and that I am not sure personally, of course, how to address that fully. But I would also say that in addition to trying to counter some of the information that is out there right now, it's also important that, you know, besides this fraction of the area of Donbass, the rest of Donetsk and the rest of Luhansk, and even parts of Zaporozhye and Kharkiv and what have you, Dnipropetrovsk, it's also very important to concentrate on information sources in these regions as well, because these regions they voted majority, let's say, pro-European, but that doesn't mean that this is 99 percent of the people as well.

There will be a lot of reforms that Ukraine must undergo in the next 12 months, 24 months, I'm not sure how long, but it's very important, I think, that support be given to the Ukrainian authorities on communicating what this European choice means.

The second point I am going to make here is just that, getting outside of the area of media, and I don't think we're there yet, of course, but I do also worry about, you know, the longer the conflict drags on—and this is ultimately what I think Russia's intention is, is to solidify the situation and to get to the point where we are stuck, you know, and where we cannot easily go back. You saw the Ukrainian army rapidly pushing back on the separatists and on the territory held by the separatists, and that's when you immediately saw, a few months ago, the counter-action by special forces of Russia, and supplies, in order to stop that beating back and to reverse the situation.

I'm still not giving up and I still don't think we're there yet, and I still think the situation can be turned around. But in terms of support, as well, looking ahead, the more the situation gets to be of a semi-permanent nature, we need to make sure that there is continued support for Ukraine to show the difference, to show what European Ukraine is going to mean. We need to try to come to the point where it looks more, sort of, like, let's say, Germany, you know, a GDR FDR situation, where clearly there is a better alternative and that's what the citizens want. That's something that would require a lot of support and a lot of investment on Ukraine, because there has to be shown to the people that are left there, because we also know that many of the people who were most anti-separatist and most pro-Ukrainian have been forced to flee—but that we show that there

is a far better opportunity out there and a way of life, and that these people can have this way of life too.

Ms. FOX. I wanted to add that it's a relatively small slice of Ukraine that is not getting Ukrainian unbiased source of information as opposed to Russian sources, and the information war is very, very, very important, including in Germany and the U.S. and a lot of places outside of Ukraine. But in Ukraine there are hearts and minds to be won over by people not subject to Russian propaganda, and as I tried to point out in my remarks, there are opportunities, I think, for both civil society and the government to do that.

Mr. DEYCHAKIWSKY. OK, thank you. Now we'll move on to questions from the audience. If you could please come up to the mic, because this is going to be—this is being transcribed. Please identify yourselves. You're welcome to make comments, but try to keep them short and concise, and ask a question at the end, or simply ask a question. So. We'll give it a little time, because I know—That's right. Olga had set this up, and we forgot to take advantage of it when she was presenting. So, please, go on and tell us what else OPORA is involved with. Thank you.

Ms. AIVAZOVSKA. Why? Yuri is my colleague from Ukraine. He is leader of our network and he knows very well about parliamentary monitoring, because we understood in 2012 that after election our life doesn't happen—don't and—and that's why we tried to push our parliament to be more transparent, to be more accountability—to have more level of accountability and so on. We have some ideas. Yuri?

Mr. YURI. OK. Hello, everybody. Observing the elections we have understood that, OK, elections will be good and parliament can be good and properly elected, or openly elected, but then what's going on in the parliament after the elections? We were there, in their work, monitoring them. What do we do? Firstly, we monitor all the quantitative information we can get, and not only monitoring but also do two things. Firstly, we propose changes and our amendments, recommendations and views to the parliament, to the committees and to the MPs like how to work better, what could be improved or, for example, what could be improved just like this? This also were important because sometimes they can't see that they can improve a lot of things and they don't need any money or resources for this. Secondly, we analyze the qualitative information—draft laws, laws. We have a special methodology containing of 30-something criterias how to analyze the draft law, how to calculate how much is transparent, qualified, quantified, and if it will work or not. Also, we read all the draft laws our parliament produce. It's something I think like 600 per month, yeah, draft laws. So we read all of them, give our comments on each and every one of them, like proposing that maybe this could be improved somehow or maybe, like, stop working with this and, like, forget about it for a few months and so on. That's the main things we are doing now.

After the elections we have got a lot of our own experience of election organizing about the job of government should do. We will prepare, in a few weeks, a bunch of recommendations and improvements for parliamentary legislation—for the governmental legislation for the changes to the political party law. As you've seen, like, right now the political party doesn't work properly for the transparency of partisan public finances.

Mr. DEYCHAKIWSKY. OK, thank you. Any other questions? Karl, come on up to the mic—from our Baltic friends.

QUESTIONER. This is not so much a question but just a—just a comment, I suppose. My name is Karl Altau with the Joint Baltic American National Committee. We represent the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian American communities. We're actually here on the Hill today in the Senate—perfect timing because you had this briefing today, but we're dropping off letters to the Senate asking for support for the Crimea Nonrecognition Resolution and also the Ukraine Support Act.

We've been just leaving the message we're here in support of Ukraine, also the Baltic countries and our Central East European colleagues and allies. We're very anxious right now, obviously, so this election result was very—was very positive for us as well, although we realize that the situation also is very dire.

I commend along with my colleagues who are here today, we commend your bravery and your fortitude in moving forward. So we'll continue to work together with you. Actually working with the Ukrainian community on two days of advocacy next week in the Congress, so we'll be back and spreading the word. I wanted to recognize my two colleagues who are with me today: Christina in the back over there, and Elisma right here. So we stand with you. Thank you. Appreciate it.

Mr. DEYCHAKIWSKY. Thanks a lot, Karl.

Let me take advantage of this opportunity. Indeed there is going to be a lot of advocacy, particularly on behalf of S. 2828, the Ukraine Freedom Support Act. This is a bill that was introduced in the Senate before the break by Senators Menendez and Corker. And I'm proud that my chairman—our chairman of the Helsinki Commission, Senator Ben Cardin, is an original cosponsor, along with Senators Ed Markey and Rob Portman. So it's a bipartisan bill.

It garnered the support of all 18 members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. This was on the day that President Poroshenko appeared and spoke before Congress, but it was also the day that the Senate left before the break. We'll see if, during this lame duck session, this bill will pass or not. It remains to be seen. It's possible, but I think it's far from certain, for a lot of reasons.

I'm saying this as one who hopes it passes during the lame duck session—there will be opportunities in the next Congress, because it's important to send a message to Moscow. The bill of course, as you know, calls for defensive military aid—some call it lethal military assistance—as well as increasing and strengthening sanctions. That's something that, even if we look at the events of recent days, in terms of Moscow's continued aggression in southeastern Ukraine, it really calls for more action by the United States and the international community.

Anybody else have a question? Oh, Paul. OK.

QUESTIONER. Hi. I'm Paul Massaro. I am a staff associate of the U.S. Helsinki Commission. And thank you all very much for your comments. I guess I've gotten from the comments that it seems like building the new governing coalition following the election has been quite difficult at this point. I wanted to see if maybe you could elaborate on some of the points of contention currently in the coalition-building process, and I guess also maybe what kind of coalition we could end up with in Ukraine. Thank you.

Mr. NIX. You go first.

Ms. AIVAZOVSKA. OK. I think that we will see a coalition from four political parties: Petro Poroshenko, People's Front, Samopomich, Lyashko's party, and maybe with

Batkivshchyna. So four or five, because all of these political parties are going to prepare their own coalition agreement. And we know some points of these agreement. It is very good as for me because it looks like a plan because before we never had such plan for political parties in our parliament, unfortunately even some calendar of our draft laws about the main objectives for parliament, or some fraction and so on.

I don't think so that we really had a big problem with this coalition, but we will have a problem with opposition, because our parliament needs to have a really qualitative and effective and active opposition because these political parties which organized a coalition will be much more progressive if they will have great opposition in the parliament. Unfortunately, our oppositional bloc will not such great opposition for this coalition.

But the main problem now, it is a discussion about future government, because questions about prime minister and ministers in this government are on the closed doors in the presidential administration, as usually. Some of the political parties, which are the part which is part of this new coalition, publicly said that they don't want to be part of government, but unfortunately in a real discussion we heard other messages from all of them. That's why our president wants to—to to have a main bloc in the government, as we know, but the results of people's bloc show that president didn't won this election—I'm talking about national districts. Of course, presidential party get many mandates in single-mandate districts, but politically, emotionally, they didn't win this campaign.

Mr. NIX. In response to your basic question, what are the particulars of these current discussions in the formation of government, no different than any other. These are discussions about primarily the prime minister and other positions in government.

Let's remember, it's important to note that Ukraine is now back to the constitution of 2004, where the prime minister wields tremendous power, but under the current circumstances, in his position as commander in chief of the armed forces, the president continues to wield considerable power because the war is central to just about everything that the new government will undertake.

The prime minister's position is very important because of the fact that Ukraine is at war, the president also has important powers. So this is driving a lot of the discussion. Obviously, Mr. Yatsenyuk and his bloc feel that he should continue as prime minister. I think it's a fair guess that he probably will. My prediction is that the government will be formed in the next two to two-and-a-half weeks.

The pro-European parties have a lot in Parliament, they will form a coalition. It will be pro-European. A lot of the discussions are some of the minor ministries and there's also discussion about what should be the subject that the primary and first areas of reform, but I think there's basic agreement. Again, all you have to do is look at the polling data is what the people expect. The people expect peace and security, some solution to the military aggression in the east, and they expect quick government action on the creation of jobs and combating corruption.

Those are the main issues, that's what the people want, and these newly elected members of Parliament and these new ministers, whoever they are, are aware of that, and they know that they're going to be watched and judged in the next several months as to whether they perform on that. If they don't, you might see people back in the streets again.

I think this government is going to come up with a coalition, it's going to come up with an agenda and it's going to move Ukraine forward, but again, as I said in my opening statement, Ukraine can't do it by itself. It needs a lot of assistance from the West.

Mr. DEYCHAKIWSKY. OK, thank you. We have time for one more question. Going once, going—go.

QUESTIONER. Hi, my name is William McConnell. I work in the office of Congresswoman Lois Frankel, and I was at the State Department before this working for Assistant Secretary Nuland right about the time that Director Kostelancik left.

My question concerns mostly how the new coalition, will that change the dynamic surrounding the association agreement with the European Union? Will certain agreements, especially with Russia, be revisited in your opinion? And will that change?

Mr. WEISE. I will say very briefly that I think the electoral outcome, as it were, the outcomes, I think, was also, you know, a stamp of legitimacy for the pro-Europe for some of these agreements that had already been made. Now as to whether or not, you know, this moves forward, some of the delays that had been instituted on that agreement at the last minute, I really don't know.

It is conceivable because it also seems like many other deals that were made are sort of now off the table. They're not officially off the table but, you know, things have been violated, and so that gives the president, the grounds to go back to the table and look to maybe even implement some of those agreements even at a more rapid schedule.

Mr. DEYCHAKIWSKY. So you're saying we don't know. Nobody knows, but that was a good answer.

First, I want to thank the audience. This is actually, you may or may not know quite a Ukraine day. It turns out, according a count of a colleague of mine, there are seven events or meetings on Ukraine today in Washington. That testifies to the interest and attention that's being garnered to Ukraine and the Ukrainian crisis these days.

I want to thank our panelists for really excellent presentations. Insightful, interesting and a great discussion. More importantly for all the work that you and your organizations are doing to consolidate democracy in Ukraine, something which clearly is not only in Ukraine's interest but as we've increasingly seen with events that have taken place over the course of the last year, very much in the interests of the international global order and international peace and security.

I have to make a commercial announcement. The commission will be holding a hearing on corruption next Wednesday. You could get the information on our website, www.csce.gov, and that hearing will also have a Ukraine component.

Thank you again for the presentations, and thank you for coming. The briefing's adjourned.



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