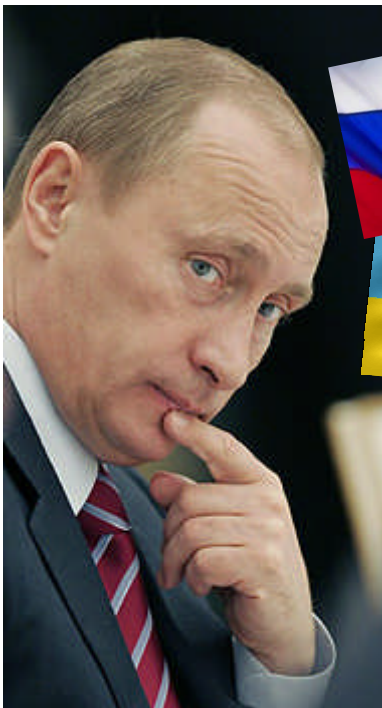


Putin Rebuke to Yanukovych

Last week Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych visited Moscow where he received an unexpected rebuke from Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Russian premier made remarks that revealed



▲ Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin was critical of Ukraine's evolving political landscape, saying that he was unsure who was in power. Picture: Kremlin.ru.

the relationship between the two leaders was not quite as firm as it has been in the past.

Mr Putin's frustration with his close ally was evident in his opening remarks at a bilateral economic meeting, which paves the way for the Russian-Ukrainian interstate commission. The latter will be held in Russia in August and attended by the two countries' presidents.

Mr Putin began by expressing regret over the recent political crisis in Ukraine. "Frankly speaking, we look with sympathy at what is happening in Ukraine, since all recent indications showed that economic growth and real improvement in the social sphere had started, and now the country has again run into political problems that need to be got through," said the Russian leader, "but we are counting on our primary partner in the post-Soviet space, and in general one of our main economic partners, to deal with these problems as quickly as possible. Everything will be restored and happen in due course...we hope within the framework

of the law and the existing constitution."

According to Kommersant, "Vladimir Putin spoke to Viktor Yanukovych like an older brother, one who is concerned about what's going on in his younger brother's life but who also finds it difficult to understand how the guy can live in such revolting disorder."

A sometimes gloomy Mr Yanukovych did his best to explain the situation and remain positive, "The main thing that we have managed to achieve during that period – and we believe it to be a big achievement – is that all branches of government are operating within the law." Mr Yanukovych then conceded, "however there are still unresolved questions that need to be resolved, mainly by the opposition." He was referring to the legal issues and events surrounding the dissolution of parliament and the elections scheduled for 30 September.

"You don't have an opposition. All of you are in the government! Who is in the opposition? I can't figure it out for the life of me. Everybody's in power over there."

The Russian premier, who was clearly peeved, interrupted his pro-Kremlin colleague, "You don't have an opposition. All of you are in the government! Who is in the opposition? I can't figure it out for the life of me. Everybody's in power over there."

A Russian businessman, who wishes to remain anonymous, likened the rebuke to "a slap to an errant child," but also remarked, "this could be the beginning of the end for Yanukovych who, despite being the beneficiary of Kremlin support for his campaigns, has consistently failed to impress."

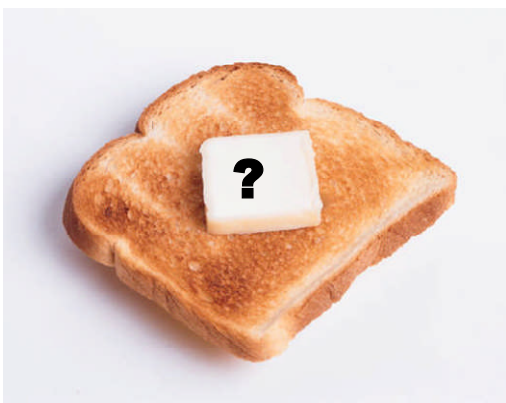
Hryhoriy Nemyria, a BYuT deputy leader and Ms Tymoshenko's top foreign affairs advisor, said, "We trust the elections and constitutional reform will lead to the stability that is valued so highly and will be the foundation for improved relations between our two countries. Good relations with Russia is a strategic priority for us."

In the first ten months of 2006, trade between Russia and Ukraine reached \$20 billion, with Ukrainian exports to Russia steadily increasing.

Ukraine remains a key country for oil and gas transits to Europe – Russia pumps 80 percent of gas through Ukraine and 15 percent of its oil exports. Bi-lateral discussions on the price of gas imported to Ukraine from Russia are likely to be put off until after the September election.

A Grain of Truth?

Last week's issue of Inform reported on the alarming increase in the price of bread in Ukraine. Knowing that this is a politically sensitive issue and with an election looming, Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych threatened to sack ministers who he holds responsible and has lashed out at the opposition in an effort to shift the blame. However, new information has come to light indicating that the price of bread has been artificially manipulated.



A BYuT press statement indicated that the government has granted licenses to businesses aligned with the present administration, which have bought up bread on a large scale. Shortly thereafter, the Cabinet of Ministers discussed a possible bread shortage and prices rocketed – in some areas up 20 percent.

Dealers associated with the government, such as Mykhaylo Tabachnyk, the proprietor of the largest grain enterprise in the south and east of Ukraine (Mykolayivkhlil, Odessa Karavay, Ukragroleasing, etc.), have gained a substantial grip on the grain market. Furthermore, despite claims that it is not involved in the bread business, System Capital Management – the business group founded by Rinat Akhmetov – has substantial stakes in a number of bakeries.

"Instead of trying to shift the blame onto the shoulders of politicians, Mr Yanukovych should look closer to home," said Oleksandr Turchynov, BYuT deputy leader, "it is either a case of the government being inept by not acting quickly to reassure the markets, or there is something more sinister afoot."

First Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Mykola Azarov admitted that there was no objective reason for prices of the country's staple food to go up, and reaffirmed that



Ukraine has enough bread and grain stocks to meet its domestic needs.

While there was a drought in May and June, experts forecast that this will reduce the grain harvest by only 7 to 10 million metric tones. Ukraine has large stocks of grain. Consequently, the domestic market should not be impacted.

A hard hitting statement from BYuT said, "Those who pick the pockets of citizens and thus earn millions should be dismissed, regardless of their closeness to any political force."

What is the Future Like?

The following extract is from an article by Yulia Tymoshenko that appeared in the newspaper *Zerkalo Nedeli*, entitled '*Fall – 2007: faith, hope, love!*' In the article Ms Tymoshenko answers the rhetorical question 'what will the future be like?'

The full article can be found at <http://www.mw.ua/1000/1550/59656/>

ZERKALO NEDELI



Someway or another, we are choosing our own way. Ukraine will never be the same as it was before 2004.

We are moving forward. There are still many questions that none of our present politicians can provide the answers to. What guarantees are there for the victory of democratic forces? Would a coalition between Our Ukraine and the Party of Regions be created once again? Is Yushchenko going to get rid of Tymoshenko and Yanukovich with the help of Baloha and Akhmetov? But I think that we have almost put an end to the era that brings up these questions. We are almost done with intrigues, unfair agreements, plots and murky games. Almost. We just need to take one or two more steps forward.

We will give morality to our society after the upcoming elections. Mankind finished with cannibalism and slavery years ago and we should be done with political betrayal now. Things need to be different. On April 2, the president of Ukraine not only signed the decree on the dissolution of the Verkhovna Rada but he also put an end to the Soviet-style political system of that day. That's why his decree should be included in the history books. It changes not only the course of deputies, but the whole nation, offering a new direction for progress. I hope better times will come.

Regrettably, our opponents do not appreciate this. It was absolutely in vain that Viktor Yushchenko asked political forces to at least co-exist, if not to live in peace and harmony. Sadly, they don't want and don't know how to co-exist. Half an hour after Moroz (chairman of the parliament) announced that Tymoshenko was not a deputy anymore Vasyl Kyselev said: "Let's put her in jail." No, they didn't learn anything. They cannot understand that it is impossible to live in a society limited by vengeance, fear and the instinct for self-preservation. And it is sad that they cannot be taught; they cannot be infused with a moral code or common sense.



You know, before Europeans came to North America, it is said there was a big colony of so-called wandering pigeons. As the Europeans inhabited the new continent, these birds became a part of their diet. Consequently they disappeared. According to some modern scientists, the birds flew away. They flew to the ocean, never to return. A whole biological classification self-destructed in protest against human cruelty. There are birds that are not able to live in confinement, and fortunately there are political forces that don't want to accept lies, insincerity and immorality in Ukraine. These forces choose freedom. There are only two ways to reach peace in our country: either give up or win. We have chosen the victorious path. The country will choose freedom.

Questions or comments? E-mail us at taras@byti.org.ua