



## BYuT Dismisses Hysterical Statement

Officials at the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko (BYuT) dismissed as a "hysterical statement" the accusation that Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko is guilty of "betraying" national interests because of her measured response on the Georgia-Russia conflict.



▲ Hryhoriy Nemyria, Deputy Prime Minister dismissed the allegations leveled at Ms Tymoshenko.

"The allegation does not warrant serious discussion," said Hryhoriy Nemyria, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for European integration and official government envoy to Tbilisi. "The accusation says more about the Presidential Secretariat than it does any semblance of fact," he added.

The accusation of treachery came from the Deputy Chief of Staff of Ukraine's Presidential Secretariat, Andriy Kyslynsky, in the form of a statement on the Secretariat's website. It alleges that the premier is in collusion with the Russian government for taking a measured position over the conflict with Georgia, in return for Russian funds to back her presidential campaign.

The statement claims "nearly one billion US dollars have been reserved for the project to support Yulia Tymoshenko," and that Viktor Medvedchuk will run Ms Tymoshenko's presidential election campaign. It contends that evidence supporting the allegations will be submitted to the authorities. But to-date no information has been made available for scrutiny.

The sensational claims, which are designed to undermine Ms Tymoshenko's popularity, have backfired spectacularly.

Senior BYuT officials claimed that Ms Tymoshenko made her views on the conflict clear from the outset, in that Georgian sovereignty and territorial integrity must be observed. The Cabinet of Ministers merely deferred major statements on the conflict to the president and got on with the important job of evacuating Ukrainian citizens and their families and coordinating deliveries of humanitarian aid.

**"They still have one more crime to pin on Tymoshenko. They can say that there hasn't been Armageddon yet because Yulia Tymoshenko hasn't engineered it."**

▶ Leonid Kravchuk  
Ukraine's first president.



"It is entirely inappropriate for the president's office to seek to politicise the conflict for domestic purposes – we don't do PR on bloodshed, such behaviour is inexcusable," said Mr Nemyria.



Even the leader of the Opposition, Viktor Yanukovich, appeared flabbergasted. "I have no information on this issue. If I had it I would offer my assessment," said the former prime minister and leader of the Party of Regions. He added that concrete facts should be provided in such cases.

Ukraine's first president, Leonid Kravchuk, said he was against officials making irresponsible statements and noted that Ms Tymoshenko has been accused of all crimes imaginable. "They still have one more crime to pin on Tymoshenko. They can say that there hasn't been Armageddon yet because Yulia Tymoshenko hasn't engineered it. When they accuse her of not starting the Armageddon, I will say it out and loud they are nuts, and instead of going in for politics they should be going for treatment in a clinic."

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## Answering the Call of Duty

The government expressed gratitude to Ukrainian airline staff involved in the evacuation of Ukrainian citizens and their families from Georgia during the recent conflict.

Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko thanked the employees of Pivdenni Avialinii (Southern Airlines) Aviation, DonbasAero and Ukrainian Aviation Transport for their efforts. "These crews had risked themselves and flown to the zone of military conflict not fully realising how this voyage would end," said the premier. She said that not all the companies approached by the government were willing to fly into the danger zone.



The evacuation of Ukrainian citizens and their families was one of the prime objectives of Deputy Prime Minister, Hryhoriy Nemyria's diplomatic mission to Tbilisi. A total of 501 Ukrainian citizens and their families were evacuated from Georgia. Some 404 were flown out and 97 left by ship. During his visit, Mr Nemyria met with Georgian officials and foreign envoys and ensured that humanitarian aid from Ukraine was being delivered.

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## PM Pledges More Funds for Road Building

Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko visited the Kharkiv region where she opened the Kharkiv - Krasnograd - Pereshchepyne highway. Whilst there she pledged amendments to the State Budget to increase spending on road construction by UAH 24.3 billion (\$5 billion).



The new stretch of highway connects transit roads from the north and south of the country and when connected with Dnipropetrovsk, will provide Ukraine with a complete north-south corridor.

The premier was pleased with the work undertaken. "Today we have made one more step towards building Europe in Ukraine" she said, emphasising the strategic importance of Ukraine as a bridge to European countries. She also praised the quality of the new highway, pointing out that Ukraine had found a way to build European standard quality highways at a fraction of the cost of roads built in Western Europe.



On average, the cost of one kilometre of the new highway amounts to \$3.6-3.9 million, compared to about \$10 million in other parts of Europe.

Ukraine has a need to improve its roads, rail and airport infrastructure ahead of the UEFA EURO 2012 championships.

The premier pledged to submit amendments to the State Budget to increase spending on road construction five-fold from the previous year. The draft legislation is slated to be put before the Verkhovna Rada in September.

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## Conflict Reveals Party Divisions

As Russian troops withdraw from Georgia to pre-conflict positions, politicians of all colours are counting the cost of the dispute. At times the fog of war was seemingly mirrored by the positions of some of Ukraine's political parties. However, analysis of their respective positions has revealed a lot about their visions for the region and for Ukraine.

### The Opposition



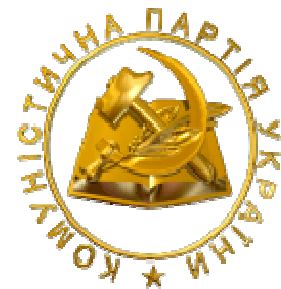
▲ Viktor Yanukovich, leader of the Party of Regions.

As the fighting unfolded, the pro-Kremlin Party of Regions and Communist Party expressed little sympathy for the Georgian administration; the former slamming Georgia for "aggression against the people of South Ossetia."

Furthermore, both parties took to heart Russia's accusation that Ukraine was arming Georgia and demanded an investigation into arms sales.

"Ukraine is one of the world's major arms suppliers," explained a government insider, "so it should come as no surprise that equipment was sold to Georgia in the same way equipment was sold to other states, but the deals were of a legitimate commercial nature, adhering to international law."

Indeed, Mr Yanukovich's (leader of the Party of Regions) new found conscience is bewildering given that Ukraine has provided military-technical cooperation to Georgia for the past 15-years. Military supplies were provided under President Leonid Kuchma and continued under the auspices of Mr Yanukovich's administration.



Not missing a trick, Mr Yanukovich's former ally, the Communist Party, which is staunchly anti-NATO, made a fresh appeal to halt all military exercises involving NATO in Ukraine. "That was only to be expected," said one commentator, "and consistent with its long-standing policy."

### Our Ukraine-People's Self-Defence

In contrast, the Our Ukraine-People's Self-Defence (OU-PSD) bloc was quick to show its support for the Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili. President Viktor Yushchenko visited Tbilisi where he declared, "Freedom is worth fighting for" and told Georgians, "you are not alone. We have arrived to confirm your independence, your territorial integrity. Georgia is independent and will be independent always."



The message driven home by the president – and supported by the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko (BYuT) – is the overriding need to respect Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

## **Tougher Presidential Position Over Black Sea Ports**

But a tougher line emerged from the president, after a meeting of the National Security Defence Council (NSDC) on 13 August, when he passed a decree requiring the Russian Black Sea Fleet to give 72-hours notice before crossing the Ukrainian border (in other words: provide three-days notice before setting sail from Sevastopol, the naval base it rents from Ukraine until 2017). In the event of non-compliance the foreign ministry said it reserved the right to ask the offending vessel or aircraft to leave Ukrainian territory.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov dismissed the decree saying that it reflected "an obsessive desire to please NATO and join it."

Days later, in a move which looked calculated to anger Moscow, the president announced his willingness to provide NATO with a Ukrainian satellite facility to support its proposed European missile defence system.

## **Presidential Attack on Tymoshenko**

What happened next bordered on the bizarre. On 18 August, Andriy Kyslynsky, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Secretariat, accused Prime Minister Tymoshenko of "betraying" national interests by not backing Georgia in the conflict. He alleged that Ms Tymoshenko's measured approach was in return for Moscow's backing for her candidature in the 2010 presidential election and that secretly \$1 billion had been earmarked by the Kremlin to support her campaign.

Such claims were dismissed by BYuT officials as "hysterical" and "fanciful."

"The government of Ukraine adopted a clear position from the outset," explained Hryhoriy Nemyria, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for European integration, "the centrepiece of which was the recognition and support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. Understandably, the president took the lead in voicing the official Ukrainian position, and we felt no need to repeat it. The accusations against the prime minister are totally misplaced and utterly inappropriate."

## **BYuT's Position**

BYuT observed protocol and deferred all major statements on the escalating conflict to the president who has responsibility for foreign policy. There was nothing surprising in this. This pattern of presidential deference was repeated in all states as the presidents of France (leading the EU diplomatic mission), Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia took the lead in visiting the Georgian capital.

The position of the prime minister was broadly supportive of the president in respecting Georgian sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, the premier was keen not to escalate regional tension. "Concerning the Black Sea Fleet, international agreements must be observed and it is unambiguous," she said. "I consider today Ukrainian authorities should act with great responsibility and have no right to engage Ukraine into any military conflict."



▲ Viktor Yushchenko, President of Ukraine.



Earlier, the deputy premier made clear BYUT's concerns: "This crisis makes crystal clear that the security vacuums that have existed in the post-Soviet space remain dangerous. Because it is the largest country in the region after Russia, and because it shares such a long border with the European Union, Ukraine remains at risk in this type of vacuum."

Mr Nemyria stressed the importance of closer cooperation between the EU and Kyiv in developing EU security policy. "Ultimately, this will benefit all concerned," he said.

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## PM Tops List of Most Influential Ukrainians

Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko is the front-runner in the latest opinion polls and last week was rated the most influential Ukrainian by Korrespondent magazine.

According to Reuters: "Opinion polls give Tymoshenko 24 percent -- enough to win a presidential election if it were held now." Former prime minister Viktor Yanukovich has 20 percent while the president is languishing at around 7 percent.

Korrespondent magazine placed Ms Tymoshenko first in its list of most influential Ukrainians, ahead of Rinat Akhmetov, Ukraine's richest man and Party of Regions backer, in second place and President Viktor Yushchenko in third. Mr Yanukovich slipped to sixth place.

First Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Turchynov was placed tenth and Hyrhorii Nemyria, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for European integration, placed twenty-fifth.

Korrespondent editor-in-chief Vitaliy Sych noted that Mr Yanukovich was "passive" in opposition. "Mr Yanukovich almost did not influence at all the country's life this year. A real politician, in my opinion, is known by his work in the opposition," he said.

Volodymyr Kornilov, director of the Institute of CIS countries (Ukrainian branch) thought it strange how quiet Mr Yanukovich had been during the past few months. However he warned that "It is too early to discard the politician who has the highest or second highest rating."

### Korrespondent's top 20 most influential Ukrainians

- 1 Yulia Tymoshenko, Prime Minister
- 2 Rinat Akhmetov, President of System Capital Management
- 3 Viktor Yushchenko, President
- 4 Viktor Baloha, Chief of Staff, Presidential Secretariat
- 5 Viktor Pinchuk, owner of Interpipe steel and media barron
- 6 Victor Yanukovich, leader of the Party of Regions
- 7 Ihor Kolomoyskiy, member of PryvatBank Supervisory Council
- 8 Arseniy Yatseniuk, Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada
- 9 Raisa Bohatyryova, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council
- 10 Oleksandr Turchynov, First Deputy Prime Minister
- 11 Kostyantyn Zhevago, head of Finances and Credit financial-industrial group;
- 12 Yuri Lutsenko, Interior Minister
- 13 Leonid Chernovetsky, Kyiv Mayor
- 14 Vitaliy Hayduk, President of Industrial Group consortium
- 15 Serhiy Taruta, Chairman of the board of the Industrial Union of Donbass
- 16 Borys Kolesnikov, Party of Regions lawmaker, owner of UkrInvest company
- 17 Volodymyr Lytvyn, leader of the parliamentary faction of his eponymous bloc
- 18 Volodymyr Stelmakh, head of the Central Bank of Ukraine
- 19 Valeriy Khoroshkovskiy, chairman of the State Customs Service
- 20 Dmitriy Firtash, co-owner of RosUkrEnergo and owner of Group DF

