



Medvedev slams Yushchenko

Presidential candidates take sides on Russia

August 12, 2009

Brad Wellsbw@concorde.com.ua
+380 44 391 5577

Yesterday Russian President Dmitry Medvedev attacked the policies of Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko as "anti-Russian" and expressed his desire to rebuild relations under new leadership. The open letter represents more in the context of the upcoming presidential election than about any current gap in Ukraine-Russia relations, with the prospective candidate seeking to play the statement their advantage.

Recent presidential poll results

Viktor Yanukovich	22.0%
Yulia Tymoshenko	13.0%
Arseniy Yatseniuk	11.0%
Viktor Yushchenko	4.0%
Petro Symonenko	4.0%
Volodymyr Lytvyn	3.0%
Undecided	15.0%

*Note: Conducted July 20-28**Source: Razumkov Center (via Interfax)***Presidential candidates**

Viktor Yushchenko	Yulia Tymoshenko
Viktor Yanukovich	Arseniy Yatseniuk
Anatoliy Hrytsenko	Oleh Tyahnybok
Inna Bohoslovskaya	Serhiy Tihipko
Natalia Vitrenko	Volodymyr Lytvyn

*Note: Candidates who have publicly stated an intent to contest the presidential election**Source: Local media reports***Presidential election watch list**

Start of campaigns	October 19, 2009
Election date	January 17, 2010

Views on Medvedev's letter

It is a message to any new leader that we will deal with you only when you accept our demands – and the demands are made very clear: do not enter NATO and accept Russia's energy rules. – *Lilia Shevtsova, analyst at the Moscow Carnegie Centre, Financial Times*

There is now a certain external threat from Russia and the beginnings of unification in the country against Medvedev. Now Yushchenko's ratings may increase, especially in Western Ukraine. – *Kost Bondarenko, Director of the Gorshenina Institute of Management, Ekonomicheskies Izvestia*

Now the leadership in Russia puts forward the idea that a regime change would solve all their problems. This is false... – *Valery Chaly, Director of International Programs at the Razumkov Center, Kommersant*

Medvedev labels Yushchenko's actions "anti-Russian"

Yesterday Russian President Dmitry Medvedev published an open letter on the Kremlin's official website accusing his Ukrainian counterpart, Viktor Yushchenko, of taking anti-Russian positions on key issues and consciously working against principles of partnership with Russia. Medvedev said that he hoped new leadership in Ukraine, a veiled jab at Yushchenko's bid for re-election in January, would be ready to build mutually beneficial relations.

Russia delays appointment of new ambassador to Ukraine

In his letter, Medvedev said he would postpone sending a new Russian ambassador to Ukraine to replace Viktor Chernomyrdin, who was recalled in June. Mikhail Zurabov, a former health minister, was confirmed by Ukraine for the post last week, but local pundits, even at the time, speculated that his appointment would be delayed. This follows the tit-for-tat expulsion of diplomats by both countries in recent weeks. In our view, Zurabov is not likely to take up his new job until after Ukraine's presidential election in January.

Responses from major presidential candidates

- Viktor Yushchenko (via Vera Ulyanchenko, his chief of staff): sought to galvanize his electorate by linking the statement to Russian attacks on Ukraine's sovereignty. "The aggressive tone of the statements by the Russian leader concerns not just Viktor Yushchenko and his policies, but our entire nation and all Ukrainian people."
- Viktor Yanukovich: continued to play the opposition card, supporting Medvedev's arguments. "With the current authorities, there is practically no hope for an improvement in relations with Russia. The first thing I will do after coming to power is revive positive neighborly relations with Russia."
- Yulia Tymoshenko: no comment. Tymoshenko was also notably silent during last summer's main wedge between Ukraine-Russia relations – Russia's war with Georgia over South Ossetia and Abkhazia
- Arseniy Yatseniuk: avoided taking sides. Key throwaway quote - "I would like to stress that there are problems on both the Ukrainian and Russian sides."

Presidential candidate roundup: Who's in and who's out?

- Concorde Capital culled local media reports for announcements by candidates that have publicly stated their intent to contest the election (see table in left margin). Keep in mind: this list will expand - official applications are not due until 71 days before the poll
- Oleksandr Moroz, head of the Socialist Party, said yesterday that he would not run and that his party could submit a joint candidate with the Communists
- Kyiv mayor Leonid Chernovetsky said today that he will not run for president

Appendix: Text of Dmitry Medvedev's open letter to Viktor Yushchenko

Date: August 11, 2009
Source: kremlin.ru

The message from President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev to President of Ukraine Victor Yushchenko reads, in part:

"Problems in bilateral cooperation have, of course, existed before. This was natural following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, when we had to develop relations between two sovereign states. However, what we have witnessed during the years of your presidency cannot be interpreted as anything other than the Ukrainian party's departure from the principles of friendship and partnership with Russia, embodied in the Treaty of 1997 [Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Russia and Ukraine]. I already wrote to you about this in November last year and the situation has not improved, but rather degraded.

Let me cite a few examples that characterize the current state of affairs created by the conscious actions of your administration.

A negative public reaction was caused by Ukraine's anti-Russian stance in connection with the brutal attack on South Ossetia by Saakashvili's regime. A year after those tragic events, once again the question of why civilians and Russian peacekeepers in Tskhinval were killed with Ukrainian weapons has arisen. Those in Kiev who supplied the Georgian army with weapons and, by the way, do not intend to stop doing so, fully share with Tbilisi the responsibility for the committed crimes.

Ignoring the views of Ukrainian citizens as well as Russia's well-known position, the political leadership of Ukraine stubbornly continues to pursue accession to NATO. And as a so-called argument you hint at a "Russian threat" to Ukrainian security, something which, as you are well aware, does not and cannot exist. Unfortunately, the logical continuation of this destructive reasoning is the incessant attempts to complicate the activities of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in violation of the fundamental agreements between our countries governing the parameters of its base in Ukraine.

At the same time, it seems that Kiev has consistently sought to sever existing economic ties with Russia, primarily in the field of energy. These actions threaten the ability of our countries to reliably use what is, in fact, a unified gas transmission system that ensures the energy security of Russia, Ukraine and many European nations.

Despite our repeated appeals at various levels, virtually nothing has been done to stop the violation of property rights of Russian investors in Ukraine. All this has essentially undermined the formerly solid economic foundations of our bilateral partnership.

Russian-Ukrainian relations have been further tested as a result of your administration's willingness to engage in historical revisionism, its heroization of Nazi collaborators, exaltation of the role played by radical nationalists, and imposition among the international community of a nationalistic interpretation of the mass famine of 1932-1933 in the USSR, calling it the "genocide of the Ukrainian people". The ousting of the Russian language from public life, science, education, culture, media and judicial proceedings continues.

In this context, the harmful practices of intervention by the government of Ukraine in the affairs of the Orthodox Church beg attention. The conditions that were created artificially on the eve and during a recent pastoral visit to Ukraine by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia could hardly be described as favorable. Against this background, it is particularly gratifying to see the genuine and broad support for the unity of Orthodoxy demonstrated by Ukrainians who welcomed the Patriarch.

Among the obstacles that authorities accountable to you have devised to hinder the positive development of Russian-Ukrainian relations is the provocation, unprecedented in the entire post-Soviet space, by expelling two of our diplomatic representatives from Ukraine without any justification. This attack – that incidentally, immediately preceded the Patriarch's visit – conveys the essence of the current Ukrainian authorities' approach to relations with Russia. Naturally, we could not but retaliate to this unfriendly measure.

I would like to inform you that in view of the anti-Russian position of the current Ukrainian authorities I have decided to postpone sending a new Russian ambassador to Ukraine. Specific date will be determined later in light of the future development of Russian-Ukrainian relations.

For Russia, from time immemorial Ukrainians have been and remain not just neighbors, but also a fraternal people for whom we will always cherish the very best feelings, with whom we share a common history, culture and religion, ties stemming from close economic cooperation, and strong kinship and human relations.

I am convinced that the leadership of Russia and Ukraine is obliged to cherish these neighborly feelings, this wealth that is also our common competitive advantage in a globalizing world. The challenge of responsible public figures is to resist the temptation to artificially divide our peoples for any geopolitical projects or political machinations, but rather safeguard the friendship between Ukrainians and Russians in every possible way, strengthen the foundations of our cooperation for the mutual benefit and prosperity of our countries. It is unacceptable to subject centuries-old relations to such serious tests for the sake of short-term developments, thereby encouraging younger generations to harbor a mutual grudge by playing with nationalist complexes.

In Russia we hope that the new political leadership of Ukraine will be ready to build relations between our countries that correspond to the genuine aspirations of our peoples and help strengthen European security."

Concorde Capital, Head office

2 Mechnikova Street, 16th Floor
Parus Business Centre
Kyiv 01601, Ukraine
Tel.: +380 44 391 5577
Fax: +380 44 391 5571

www.concorde.ua

Concorde Capital

4 Fourth Lesnoy Pereulok, 5th Floor
Capital Plaza
Moscow 125047, Russia
Tel.: +7 495 642 87 15
Fax: +7 495 225 85 00

office@concorde.com.ua

CEO

Igor Mazepa im@concorde.com.ua

Managing Director

Roman Nasirov rn@concorde.com.ua

Head of Sales & Trading

Alexander Shnir ash@concorde.com.ua

International Sales & Trading

Anastasiya Nazarenko an@concorde.com.ua
Marina Martirosyan mm@concorde.com.ua
Andriy Supranonok sap@concorde.com.ua
Marina Cherednichenko cmg@concorde.com.ua

Domestic Sales & Trading

Yuriy Pilipenko up@concorde.com.ua
Alisa Tikhomirova at@concorde.com.ua

Director of Research

Andriy Gostik, CFA ag@concorde.com.ua

RESEARCH

Strategy

Konstantin Fisun, CFA kf@concorde.com.ua
Andriy Gostik, CFA ag@concorde.com.ua

Metals & Mining

Andriy Gerus ga@concorde.com.ua

**Utilities (Telecom, Energy),
Machinery**

Yegor Samusenko syg@concorde.com.ua

Oil & Gas

Andriy Gerus ga@concorde.com.ua

Real Estate, Consumer-related

Andriy Gostik, CFA ag@concorde.com.ua

Economics, Financial services

Andrii Parkhomenko pav@concorde.com.ua

Fixed Income

Oleksandr Klymchuk ok@concorde.com.ua
Andriy Gerus ga@concorde.com.ua

Editor

Brad Wells bw@concorde.com.ua

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