



Ukraine's Democratic Development

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As prepared

Let me offer my thanks to the conference organizers. I'm pleased to be here today to discuss U.S. views on developments in Ukraine.

The United States wants to see Ukraine solidify its democratic gains, continue reform, and take its place as an integral part of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. We want to see Ukraine become a model for the region and work together with the U.S. and others to promote reform, peaceful resolutions of conflicts and democracy. The United States also appreciates Ukraine's contributions to the war against terror.

Prior to the elections on September 30, we stressed the importance of free and fair elections. The U.S. did not take sides; we will work with any government produced from a democratic process. We also have expressed our continued support for Ukraine's European choice, its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, and its integration into international institutions.

We encouraged all parties to dedicate themselves publicly to a clean campaign, and to put Ukraine's national interests before personal gain. The OSCE-ODIHR has judged in its preliminary report that the elections were conducted mostly in line with OSCE and Council of Europe commitments. We are pleased by this assessment. In FY07, the U.S. provided about \$3.4 million for activities specifically targeted to promote a free and fair election. This included support for international monitoring, elections administration, training for parties and media, and support for elections NGOs.

Many, many months over the past few years have been spent on elections, campaigning and government formation. It is time to get down to business and focus on governing. It is time to get on with it. We have stressed that we are eager to begin working with a new government, and we hope that the process of coalition formation is an expeditious one. Just as we have worked with the current democratically-elected government, we anticipate close cooperation with the next government. We have a broad agenda and are eager to get to work. Let me also stress the importance of having a strong Rada. The idea of boycotting the new Rada and forcing new elections strikes me as most unwise and harmful to Ukraine's development.

The U.S. and EU are very much in sync in our hopes that Ukraine will continue to build its young democracy and actively pursue reforms.

We work together and are very much coordinated in our support for Ukraine, and we value the extensive European contributions to Ukraine's development, just as the Europeans appreciate the crucial role of the United States. It is not for us to give the thumbs up or down on EU membership. We are not an EU member. We understand that among the EU member states and the key EU institutions, there are some differences in approach regarding Ukraine.

However, there is little disagreement concerning the necessity of promoting reforms that encourage the continued development of democracy and the rule of law, an improved investment climate and more clarity in Ukraine's institutional structures with proper checks and balances.

Additionally, the U.S. and EU can do more to support broader European energy security through dialogue with Ukraine and through efforts to help Ukraine develop a more transparent energy policy and become more energy efficient and a more reliable participant in energy markets. We need to see action on transparency, diversification, and the elimination of middlemen as a path to energy security. Ukraine needs to address the issue of energy security before its independence and sovereignty are threatened. Reforms in the energy sector will make Ukraine a more attractive partner for the EU, the U.S. and other friends of Ukraine. We encourage the EU to recognize Ukraine's European choice and demonstrate that the door remains open to countries that meet EU accession standards.

Ukrainian leaders, including the leadership of the top three parties participating in the September 30 election, have been clear - Ukraine has made its European choice and will pursue policies that promote reform and more deeply integrate Ukraine into the international community. This long-term direction is not just good for Ukraine, it is good for the U.S. and the international community and will serve as an excellent example for Ukraine's neighbors. We firmly believe that a prosperous, democratic, and sovereign Ukraine, integrated into Euro-Atlantic institutions, is in Russia's interest as well. We continue to stress that good relations with Europe and the west need not come at the expense of good relations with Ukraine's largest neighbor.

The U.S. has been, is, and will remain committed to supporting Ukraine in its development from a post-Soviet state to a prosperous, democratic, and sovereign state oriented to Europe and integrated into Euro-Atlantic institutions. We are proud that Europe is our partner in supporting democracy and reform in Ukraine. As we work together, it is important to keep in mind that the issue is not whether Ukraine could be considered for EU membership now. What is important is that U.S. and the EU are ready to work together for the benefit of Ukraine.

Thank you very much.

