The March 31, 2002
Parliamentary and Local Elections in Ukraine

A Pre-Election Report by
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I. INTRODUCTION

On March 31, 2002, Ukraine will hold elections to its national assembly, the Verkhovna Rada, and to local councils. These will mark Ukraine’s third parliamentary elections since the country’s independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. They offer an opportunity for Ukraine to resume a course of reform that has suffered significant setbacks in recent years.

Ukraine shares borders with Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova, placing it in the center of a transitional and volatile neighborhood. Events in Ukraine thus have resonance beyond its borders. Its population, approximately 49 million, is comparable to France, and the country has an impressive intellectual and industrial potential. Ukraine is made up of 24 regions, called oblasts, and the Republic of Crimea, which has autonomous status. The economy relies on farming and tourism in the west, agriculture in the south central plains, and heavy industry in the east.

Ukrainian voters will be electing a 450-member unicameral parliament. Half of the deputies will be elected from party lists and the other half from single mandate districts. The party list seats will go to those parties that pass a 4 percent threshold.

The 1996 constitution established a presidential system, in that the chief executive is elected independently of the parliament. The Ukrainian presidency wields considerable authority relative to the parliament, an advantage the incumbent president, Leonid Kuchma, has sought to preserve. Among other important prerogatives, the president is responsible for naming the government. The Rada’s basic powers relative to the executive include approving prime ministerial nominees, approving the cabinet’s program and voting no confidence in the cabinet itself. It is difficult under the constitution for the president to dissolve the parliament. The Rada, in brief, despite limitations in its ability to pursue an independent agenda, remains a significant force in Ukrainian politics.

The main players competing in the March 2002 elections will include a reform-minded bloc led by a former prime minister; groups led by business or pro-administration interests, or a combination of both; the Communist Party; and two parties in open opposition to the current administration. The lessons learned from previous elections, when many small contestants failed to cross the threshold for party list representation, have prompted individual parties to seek coalition partners this time around. With several very strong blocs participating, the race should be competitive and offer voters real alternatives. Throughout this report, the term parties will be used to refer to parties and/or blocs, unless otherwise specified.

The stakes in the March 2002 Rada elections are high. They will determine the composition of the next Ukrainian legislature, which has, for the first time, the potential to become a platform for a reform agenda. A parliament with a reform-oriented majority would have the opportunity to advance legislation to, among other things, revise the tax code, improve the land code, provide for elected — rather than appointed — governors, improve the court system, and establish an unambiguous separation of powers between the executive, legislature and judiciary.
The elections will also set the stage for the presidential elections of 2004. By then, President Kuchma will have completed his second term and is expected to step down. The parliamentary race will be a trial run for prospective contenders for his office. This election, and the political landscape that emerges from it, is therefore closely linked to the question of who will be the country’s next president. This choice, in turn, will determine whether Ukraine joins the community of democratic countries west of its border, or ties its fate to its more troubled neighbors to the east.

In the early years of Ukraine’s independence, the country took great strides in building the institutions of statehood. Elections were conducted relatively fairly and, in contrast to many other post-Soviet states, transfers of power were meaningful and nonviolent. However, over the past several years, progress has faltered. A crippled economy and exceedingly low standard of living, pervasive corruption and a fragmented political environment have discouraged earlier hopes. These problems have been exacerbated by scandals allegedly linked to the executive branch, including the murder of political journalist Georgiy Gongadze.

Another serious problem has been the erosion of the credibility of Ukrainian elections. Parliamentary balloting in 1998, a 1999 presidential election and a 2000 referendum were all marred by irregularities that called into question the integrity of the process. The OSCE noted that the 1998 elections were “marred by incidents of violence, arrests, actions against candidates and abuse of public office.” They also noted that the 1999 election was marred by the “selective interpretation and enforcement” of the law, problems with equal access to media, campaigning by executive-branch institutions, and irregularities on election day. Problems identified in the 2000 referendum included falsified signatures, early voting, and inflated voter turnout. Early signs suggest the electoral environment of 1998, 1999 and 2000 remains the same in 2002. NDI sent a pre-election delegation to Ukraine in early February to assess the pre-election environment. The delegation’s observations are included as an appendix to this report.

Also at stake in these elections is the commitment of the Ukrainian people to democratic political engagement. Thus far, voter turnout in elections has been high across the country. However, another exercise perceived as seriously flawed may sap this sense of civic duty. Following the Gongadze murder, Ukrainians turned out in record numbers to demonstrate on behalf of a more accountable, responsive government. This energy seems to have dissipated. Public disillusionment with the political process may prove as detrimental to democratic progress as any concrete policies pursued by anti-democratic authorities.

The prospects for future democratic advances and economic improvements in Ukraine depend heavily on an electoral process that is seen by the Ukrainian people as a reflection of the will of the electorate.

II ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK

A. A New Election Law
On October 18, 2001, the Ukrainian parliament passed a new election law. Each of Ukraine’s three parliamentary elections since the country’s independence has been regulated by a different election law. Just as the 1998 law took into account several shortcomings of the 1994 law, according to a 2001 OSCE report, the new legislation “makes substantial improvements compared to the previous legislations.” These revisions were codified after months of wrangling between the president and parliament over the basic electoral framework.

With support from pro-presidential parties, the president was also able to pressure the Rada into accepting 139 further amendments. The most controversial amendments concerned the duration of the campaign period. Whereas the 1997 law called for 180 days, the president strongly supported a 90-day period. [Opposition parties in the parliament viewed this relatively short campaign period as favoring those forces with media holdings and access to local and federal government leverage.] After several attempts at compromise the parliament finally conceded, and the 90-day election period officially began on January 1. This marked the beginning of the process of nominating and registering candidates and parties, and the process of forming election commissions. Campaigning, however, began only on February 9.

Another change in the new law concerns the formation of district and precinct election commissions. Under the previous law, local authorities were responsible for forming election commissions, which were heavily dominated by the representatives of local government and lacked representation of the political groups contesting the elections. Under the new law, commissions must include members of parties that passed the 4 percent threshold in the 1998 elections or have their own caucuses in the current parliament. Thus, there will still be a strong presence of pro-administration individuals on the commissions.

Despite improvements, shortcomings remain in the new legislation, and have been noted in a November 2001 OSCE report. One significant weakness in the law is that non-partisan domestic observers are not permitted to monitor the elections in the polling stations, and are only permitted to receive certified copies of voting protocols. Party, bloc and single-mandate candidate pollwatchers, representatives from foreign states and international organizations and representatives of mass media are authorized to observe the elections inside the polling station during the voting. Domestic observers will hence not enjoy the same rights as other observers.

The Autonomous Republic of Crimea will also conduct parliamentary elections on March 31 based on an electoral system whereby half of the parliament’s seats will be elected from single-mandate constituencies and half from party lists. Under the Crimean election law, the threshold for party list seats is 5 percent.

B. Proportional System

There are 127 political parties registered in Ukraine. Several of these groups have formed electoral blocs for the elections. There are 36 parties and blocs that have submitted applications for registered to the Central Election Commission (CEC). Thirty-three have been approved as of this writing. These parties will vie for 225 seats in the new parliament. Parties must receive at least 4 percent of the total votes cast to obtain seats in the parliament under the party list system.
The seats will be distributed through a method of proportional representation, whereby the total number of votes cast for parties reaching the threshold is divided by 225, which results in an "electoral quota," or the number of votes necessary to obtain one seat in the Rada. Each party's vote total is then divided by the electoral quota to determine the number of seats to be allotted to the party.

Each party has nominated a list of candidates who have been chosen at party conferences. Up to 225 names can be nominated by each party, but only 4,113 names have been submitted (not all parties nominated 225 names). The party submits its list to the CEC with candidates listed in ranked order, although only the top five names will appear on the ballot. The ballot lists all parties in an order determined by lot. An individual may be included on the list of only one party. The order of candidates on the electoral list may not be changed after the CEC registers a party. The number of seats accorded to a party will determine which candidates become deputies. In the event of a vacancy, the seat will be filled by the next name on the list, however it is possible to skip to the subsequent name at a party/bloc convention.

C. Majoritarian System

To conduct elections that will fill half of the seats in the parliament, the CEC has formed 225 single-mandate districts comprising approximately 170,000 voters each. Deviation from this figure in the number of voters in a single-mandate constituency should not exceed 10 percent. Significant redistricting did not take place this year, as it has in previous elections. A total of 3,107 candidates are registered nationwide for single-mandate seats. The candidate with a plurality of votes wins the seat. There are no turnout requirements for the election to be valid.

Repeat elections in single-mandate constituencies shall take place only in the extremely unlikely scenario in which two or more leading candidates receive an equal number of votes. The repeat elections would be called within fourteen days and would take place roughly two months later.

D. Nomination and Registration of Parties and Candidates

To serve a four-year term as a parliamentary deputy, a person must be a citizen of Ukraine, at least 21 years old, a resident of Ukraine for the previous five years, and eligible to vote. Candidates for multi-mandate and single-mandate seats can be nominated by a political party registered at least one year prior to the election date or by political blocs (which must constitute at least two parties) whose member parties were registered at least one year before the elections. Individual citizens may also nominate themselves for single-mandate constituencies.

A candidate must submit a variety of documents to the CEC to register. These include property and income statements. In addition, candidates are required to make an election deposit. A party or bloc must pay 225,000 hryvna (approx. $42,200). Single-mandate candidates are to submit 1,020 hryvna (approx. $190). Election deposits will be returned to parties or blocs that cross the 4 percent threshold and to deputies elected from single mandate constituencies. All other deposits are transferred to the state budget. This provision is to discourage frivolous candidacies.
It marks a significant departure from the previous law, under which candidates would submit signature lists rather than monetary deposits.

E. Publicity and Mass Media

The CEC and constituency commissions are charged with providing the following services to parties/blocs and single-mandate candidates: printing information posters, publicizing election programs in newspapers, and providing broadcast time on radio and television.

The CEC is authorized to “establish the procedure for using mass media” during the campaign period. It has allocated 3.34 million hryvna (approx. $628,600) for mass media services for parties/blocs and 298 thousand hryvna (approx. $56,100) for all candidates in each single-mandate constituency. The election law explicitly states that, “mass media shall be obliged to objectively cover the process of preparation and conduct of the elections.” However, it is not clear how this requirement is to be enforced, especially with regard to privately owned mass media. Coverage for parties/blocs and single mandate candidates conducted out of the resources of the CEC shall provide equal printing areas in printed media and equal broadcast time on radio and television. State-owned mass media is explicitly prohibited from campaigning on behalf of any bloc or candidate and faces suspension if this non-partisanship is violated.

Parties/blocs and single-mandate candidates are permitted to purchase mass media coverage not to exceed campaign expenditure limits, provided all are charged equally for broadcast time or printing space.

Despite the detailed provisions pertaining to mass media in the election law, there is widespread agreement that access to media will be a determining factor in the elections. The government owns a large majority of Ukraine’s printing presses, and the leader of one political party owns several of Ukraine’s television channels. There are some private media venues, but they are generally controlled by financial elites with their own political interests. There are several reports from across Ukraine that printing houses nationwide are reluctant to print opposition newspapers, and some broadcasters have refused to hold debates for all candidates. Such self-censorship can be attributed to past problems that the media have faced after printing or broadcasting stories deemed adverse to the interests of the government, whose support is essential in order for them to operate. Many printers anticipate and aim to avoid political pressure by refusing to print under the excuse of limited capacity.

F. Campaign Finance

The 2002 State Budget allocates 291.1 million hryvna (about $55 million) to the CEC for the conduct of the elections. Aside from the services provided and paid for by the CEC, which are mentioned above, parties, blocs and individuals must finance their campaigns with their own resources. Registered parties and single-mandate candidates are required to open bank accounts and provide information about these accounts to the CEC, which then will publish the information in newspapers. Parties and candidates must submit to the CEC financial statements.
on receipts and the use of resources from their election funds. The CEC may conduct random audits of party and candidate accounts as part of its duties to oversee campaign contributions and expenditures.

Unlike its predecessor, the new law places limits on campaign spending and contributions. Party spending shall not exceed approximately 2,400,000 hryvna (approx. $470,000), and single-mandate candidate spending shall not exceed approximately 160,000 hryvna (approx. $32,000). Campaign donors, only defined in the law as individual contributors, can donate no more than approximately 16,000 hryvna (approx. $3,200) to either a party or candidate. Contributions from foreign individuals and anonymous donors are prohibited.

G. Campaigning

Election campaigning commenced 50 days prior to the election, on February 9. Executive branch authorities, local government authorities and members of election commissions are prohibited from campaigning. The distribution of any monies, commodities, services or any other material goods is also prohibited.

Candidates holding positions in federal or local government may not use resources from their work, such as transportation, communication, equipment, or premises for the purpose of election campaigning. This provision of the law is significant given the widespread attention in Ukraine to the use of “administrative resources” in elections on behalf of specific campaigns.

H. Candidate Benefits

Candidates for Rada deputy may retain their jobs during the campaign period and are guaranteed the right to unpaid leave for the period of the campaign. They are also protected against dismissal from work and from military service. However, unlike previous election legislation, candidates are no longer immune from criminal proceedings or administrative prosecution.

I. Voting Procedures

Voting stations will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on March 31. The Ukrainian Constitution guarantees the right to vote to all persons 18 and older. Lists of eligible voters are compiled for each polling station by local executives and councils. Voters must produce proof of identity and sign their names on voter lists.

Voters will receive separate ballots for the party list, single-mandate and local elections. Ballots for the party list election will include the full name of every party and bloc (with member parties listed) and the names of the first five candidates on the party list. The single-mandate ballots will include the name, date of birth, place of work and residence of each candidate. On both ballots, voters will have a choice to indicate that they do not support any party or candidate. Voting booths should be arranged to ensure secrecy and easy access. Voters cast their vote affirmatively by placing a “plus” (+) sign or another indicator next to their choice. Voters are to
remain on the polling station premises only for the time necessary to vote. Disabled persons may request assistance from other citizens in marking their ballots, though this assistant may not be an official of the precinct.

Voters who cannot come to the polls for health reasons may vote at home provided they notify the appropriate precinct election commission by written request no later than twelve hours before the voting begins. Three members of the precinct election commission will go to the voter’s home and oversee the voting process.

The counting of ballots will take place after the precinct closes at a meeting of the precinct election commission, and should be done in a transparent matter. Protocols should be kept throughout the counting process, which will include the number of ballots received by the precinct, the number of voters in the district, the number of unused ballots, the number of signatures on the voters’ lists, and the number voters who received ballots (based on the stubs), which should correspond to the number of signatures. Commissioners will then calculate the number of votes cast for each party or candidate, excluding invalidated ballots, before packaging the ballots in separate envelopes for each party or candidate.

When the counting process is completed, several copies of the protocols should be made. One should be delivered immediately to the higher election commission, one should be kept with the precinct commission, and one must be posted at the polling station as public information.

The CEC must establish the results of the party list elections within fifteen days after the election, and publish them within five days after that.

Upon publication of results, a candidate becomes a deputy and thereafter may not hold more than one elected office or simultaneously work in the government. Once elected, a deputy’s immunity is guaranteed, which affords him freedom from detention, arrest, or criminal liability without the consent of the Rada. There are no restrictions on the number of terms a deputy may serve.

J. Local Elections

On March 31, Ukrainians will also elect over 225,000 deputies nationwide to local councils or Radas for four-year terms. Although the election period formally began on January 1, a new local election law was passed on February 7. As was the case four years ago, the passing of a new local election law was delayed due to disagreements between the president and parliament over basic concepts. Before the recent bill was passed, the president vetoed various drafts submitted by parliament. The new law incorporates the president’s suggested amendments, which are either of a technical nature (i.e. number of protocols to be compiled), or a reversal of the parliament’s changes proposed in previous drafts.

The disagreement over the local election law centered on the choice between a majoritarian, party-list and mixed system for local councils in cities with oblast status, such as Kyiv and Sevastopol. The president consistently rejected the parliament’s proposal to introduce a mixed
system at these levels. Another point of contention concerned the balance of representation at the rayon and oblast council levels. Under the current system favored by the president, all territorial communities have the same number of representatives to the oblast council regardless of population size. In contrast, the parliament’s draft law called for greater representation for larger communities on rayon and oblast councils.

In the 2002 elections, as in 1998, village, neighborhood, city, rayon (district) and oblast (province) councils are elected based on the single mandate system. Council chairpersons will also be elected in this way, with the exception of city council chairpersons, who are elected by the council.

The right to nominate candidates is given to political parties and blocs. It does not limit participation in local elections to the parties that are qualified to compete in the national elections. Registered public organizations, work collectives and assemblies of citizens are also allowed to nominate candidates during the nomination period, from 70 to 45 days prior to the elections. In order to register, nominees are required to submit signature lists and place deposits, which are refunded to those candidates who have won at least 5 percent of the vote. Residency requirements do exist in the local election law and are somewhat stricter for candidates for mayor and other executive offices than for single-mandate candidates.

The number of seats in a local council is left to the discretion of the councils themselves. The law does set parameters based on population figures. However, these guidelines are broad, and allow for significant leeway. Councils also decide on the establishment of polling stations and the composition of election commissions, which are responsible for redistricting based on “an approximately equal number of voters per constituency.” In composing commissions, councils “consider” but are by no means bound by petitions submitted by local organizations, political parties, and labor collectives.

The election law grants candidates an equal right to “the use of mass media” but does not specify how this right is to be exercised. The law also states that commissions shall provide for the printing of information about candidates at the public expense and shall provide space in public places for campaign materials to be posted. The candidate is also given the right to free public transportation within his/her district.

Previous plans to enact separate local election laws for Kyiv and Sevastopol as “cities of republican importance” have not materialized, however a few special considerations are made for these regions in various provisions of the law. A separate law governs elections to the parliament and local bodies in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, whose councils, elected by the single-mandate system, enjoy more autonomy than those of other oblasts. The law has been revised to a mixed electoral system and has been submitted to the president, who is expected to veto it in light of his disapproval of proportional representation at the regional level.

III. THE PRE-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT
A. East and West

Ukraine’s political party system remains unstable, so categorizing parties along a political spectrum is difficult. However, one distinction is generally clear: the division between the nationalist, western regions with sympathies towards the West, and the eastern and southern regions that are characterized by a closer affinity to Russia.

The political and economic differences between the east and west are reinforced by historical and religious ones. The western oblasts were never part of the Russian Empire and were integrated into the Soviet Union only in 1945. The west is predominantly Roman and Greek Catholic, while the rest of the country belongs to different and often feuding denominations of the Eastern Orthodox Church of the Ukrainian and Moscow Patriarchies.

As a result of these distinctions, reformist parties are pro-Western and nationalist, and their main voter base is in the western regions and the capital. In accord with their electorate, these parties range from comparatively liberal, such as the Party of Reforms and Order, to conservative and traditionalist, such as the two Rukh popular movements and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists. In contrast, the Communist left, which is associated with the elderly and those nostalgic for the stability of the Soviet past, has its main electoral base in the industrial and Russian-oriented east. The east/west cleavage also divides the Communists from the Socialists. Although the two parties have issues in common, the Communist Party targets Russian-speakers and is pro-Russia, while the Socialists derive their support from Ukrainian speakers and envisions a Ukraine based on the model of Western social democracy.

The traditional political division between the right and the left is thus superimposed upon cultural, historical and geographical divides. However, there is also a substantial electorate that does not identify with either the communists or the nationalists. The presence of this electorate explains the relative success of parties such as the Greens, Yabluko, and most recently ‘Women for the Future.’ The parties close to the executive branch of the government have been moderately successful in garnering the support of this electorate, who appear to be more afraid of a change for the worse than they are eager for a change for the better. The ‘Our Ukraine’ bloc, led by former Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko, is also trying to appeal to this electorate. This explains the broad composition of the alliance, which seeks to transcend the borders of nationalist and pro-democratic western Ukraine.

B. Regional Centers

One notable feature of the Ukrainian landscape is the importance of its regional centers. Ukraine’s political, financial and human resources are not concentrated solely in Kyiv. Urban and industrial areas outside of the capital are important political centers as well, such as Lviv in the west, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk in the east, and Odessa in the south. Accordingly, regional economic and political groups play an important role in the political life of Ukraine. The current ruling group is from Dnipropetrovsk, while the Donetsk group forms the core of the Party of Regions, a party poised to play a greater role in national politics.
C. The Tapes Scandal

Significant political developments over the past 16 months in Ukraine occurred against the backdrop of the so-called “tapes scandal.” Georgiy Gongadze, a journalist highly critical of the authorities, who worked for an online daily paper, disappeared in September 2000 and was later found murdered. In the subsequent months, a security officer, Major Melnichenko, repeatedly recorded conversations in the president's office, which, if authentic, would implicate the president in the abduction and murder of the journalist. The publication of these tapes in the Verkhovna Rada by the leader of the Socialist Party, Olexandr Moroz, provoked a governmental crisis and led to several months of street protests. Although the momentum of the protests subsided over time, the murder of the journalist has remained unsolved and questions about the tapes and the president's involvement remain unanswered.

The tapes scandal peaked from November 2000 to March 2001. In this period opposition groups demanded the impeachment of President Kuchma. The president's critics charged his administration with being hypocritical, oppressive towards the media, and dependent on business elites who amassed wealth through dubious privatization schemes. The nationalists accused the regime of selling out to Russia, while the communists accused it of selling out to the West. Students became the core of on-going protests and demands for the president's resignation or impeachment. Pro-democracy protesters saw former Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko as their leader and called upon him to join them. He declined to do so.

D. The Russia Factor

Russian state organizations and think tanks in and around Ukraine have shown a visible surge of interest in the country during the current pre-election period. Former Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin's appointment as Ambassador and Special Representative of President Putin to Ukraine was the first indication that the Russian government has turned its attention to the coming elections. Moreover, the first Congress of Russia's Ukrainians was held in Moscow in December 2001, and 2002 was proclaimed the Year of Ukraine in Russia.

Recently there have been concerns about the activities of some Russian institutions in Ukraine. For example, the Foundation for Effective Politics (FEP), which is widely reported as President Putin's main political think tank, has established a news and analysis website, Ukraina.ru, which circulated information critical of Ukraine's reformers and the West, and stories of conspiracies by individuals and groups in the US to unseat the current government in Ukraine.

E. Monitoring Efforts

The Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU), a non-partisan domestic election-monitoring group established in 1994, along with other groups, will be monitoring the 2002 elections. The organization is undertaking this effort with a history of experience in election monitoring, including in the 1998 parliamentary elections when over 17,000 monitors observed in polling
stations nationwide. In 2001, while the new election law was in the parliament, CVU took an active role in advocating for changes, especially for the inclusion of a provision authorizing domestic NGO election observers.

Since October 2001, the organization has also been conducting long-term monitoring of the electoral process with observers in each of Ukraine’s oblasts. Monitors have been collecting information on parties’, candidates’ and government officials’ preparations for the elections. CVU has held press conferences and released monthly reports on its observations.

Other CVU election-related activities will include training political party observers and election commissioners. Training will include all aspects of monitoring, voting and counting. Observers and commissioners will become familiar with the new election law and their rights and responsibilities in the polling station.

CVU is also preparing to deploy approximately 20,000 nonpartisan monitors to polling places on election day.

Other Ukrainian NGOs that will be monitoring different aspects of these elections include Equal Opportunities, the All Ukrainian Public Monitoring Committee, and the Freedom of Choice Coalition.

F. The Campaign To Date

CVU’s long-term observers as well as NDI’s pre-election delegation have gathered information that sheds light on the pre-election environment and raises concerns about the prospects for a fair electoral process.

As in previous elections, there are early indications that some political parties do not have fair access to the media. The NDI delegation observed that, “some media outlets, critical of government of business interests, have been subjected to harassment, including financial investigations, and abrupt suspension of licenses. Journalists have been subjected to intimidation and violence. The state-controlled media has demonstrated a pro-government bias. Candidates have been denied the opportunity to purchase paid advertising time.”

Other concerning activities observed to date include campaigning by state officials or the use of state resources to support favored political candidates and groups, and isolated instances of violence against political party activists. The NDI delegation also noted that “government authorities have interfered in campaigns” and have “denied public facilities and serves to candidates, parties or blocs.”

CVU’s long-term observers have also noted a variety of other problems. Before the official start of the campaign on January 1, political groups took advantage of the fact that the law governing the conduct of the campaign had not come into force. Activities that would have been illegal after January 1 were conducted with impunity through December 31. Activities of this type included: pressure from administrative authorities on opposition parties and independent mass
media; the use of official positions to support certain candidates, parties and blocs; coercion to join or leave political parties; coercion to contribute money to campaigns; misuse of government-supported media and lack of transparency in financing political party and bloc advertising. While not technically illegal, these activities advantaged some candidates and parties over others.

The process of forming electoral districts and district election commissions started in early January. These activities have generally been conducted in accordance with the election law, however there were some violations that raise concerns that problems encountered in the 1999 presidential elections may be repeated. Many political parties lack developed regional branches, and as a result, they were not able to take full advantage of the provision in the law that allows for party representation on commissions. Some parties "borrowed" representatives from others, or were persuaded to allow local executive authorities to help them in nominating candidates. As a result, not all district commissions truly represent the parties that formally nominated their members, and this raises questions about the independence of some commissions from local authorities.

According to the election law, political parties, blocs and candidates are not permitted to campaign until 50 days prior to the elections. However, the law is somewhat vague as to what constitutes campaigning and what measures can be taken against groups or individuals who violate this provision. As a result, it is difficult to judge whether the activities of parties, blocs and candidates before February 9th could be characterized as a violation, however it is clear that groups and individuals were openly disseminating materials in the pre-campaign period.

IV. COMPETING PARTIES & BLOCS

The Central Election Commission has registered 33 parties to run in the March 31, 2002 elections. However, the majority of these parties are not likely to reach the 4 percent threshold.

The large number of competing parties and blocs present two potential risks. If many parties cross the threshold, Ukraine will have a splintered and perhaps ineffective parliament. If, on the other hand, many votes go to parties that do not cross the threshold, those few that do cross it will gain a share of seats disproportionate to the voter support they received. Also, in such a situation, those voters who cast their ballots for the parties that did not cross the threshold will feel disenfranchised, and disconnected from the new parliament.

Several parties are described in the next section, in the order they will appear on the ballot. Other groups are listed below. The order of parties on the ballot was determined by lot by the CEC.

A. The Communist Party of Ukraine (#1 on the ballot)

The Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) was legalized by Ukraine's courts in October 1993, after being banned in 1991. The party remains the country's largest and best disciplined political
force and has a loyal, if diminishing, national following. The party won the largest number of
seats in both the 1994 and 1998 elections, and now has a strong faction in the parliament with
over 100 members, surpassing 27 percent in the party list vote. The party has often coordinated
with other leftist forces. The CPU is likely to attract votes from its traditional supporters in the
east and retirees nostalgic for the Soviet Union.

The party’s relationship with the current administration is somewhat ambiguous. Though
generally the party has been in opposition, at various times it has also expressed support for
government initiatives.

The CPU platform includes policies that advocate a return to central economic planning, an end
to the privatization process, the elimination of monetarist economic policies, and closer ties with
Russia and Belarus. On foreign policy, CPU leader Symonenko opposes membership in NATO.

Top five on the list:

Petro Symonenko: Joined the Soviet Communist party apparatus in 1982. At the party’s first
congress after Ukrainian independence, Petro Symonenko was elected First Secretary of the
Central Committee. He was elected to parliament in 1994 and again in 1998. Symonenko was a
candidate in the 1999 presidential election, losing to incumbent Leonid Kuchma in the second
round.

Omelian Parubok: A deputy in the Verkhova Rada.

Ivan Gerasimov: Head of the council of a Ukrainian veteran’s organization. He is a retired
general, and is not a member of any political party.

Boris Olenyik: A member of parliament since 1994, and a well-known Ukrainian writer.
Olenyik was the chair of the Committee for Foreign Affairs in the Verkhovna Rada.

Valeria Zaklunna-Myronenko: Elected to the Verkhovna Rada in 1998. She is a famous
Ukrainian actress.

B. The Bloc of Viktor Yushchenko, Our Ukraine (Nasha Ukraina) (#2 on the ballot)

Our Ukraine is a bloc of pro-reform parties headed by former Prime Minister Viktor
Yushchenko. In the parliament, the bloc is a four-party inter-faction group that has been joined
by some independent deputies. As an election bloc, Our Ukraine is composed of 10 parties from
across the political spectrum.

The main parties are National Rukh of Ukraine and Ukrainian National Rukh. These two parties
are the successor organizations to the mass pro-independence and democracy movement of the
early 1990s. A third important member of the bloc is the liberal Reforms and Order Party, a
party with 15 deputies in the parliament. These three parties are often described as national
democrats, and have their power bases in western Ukraine. The Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists is a smaller though well-established member of the bloc.

Our Ukraine advocates fiscal prudence, private property, and a balanced budget, combined with energetic privatization as the necessary prerequisites of a well functioning market economy and stable economic growth. In foreign policy it favors a western orientation and seeks close cooperation with NATO and eventual membership in the European Union.

The bloc will garner support in the central sections of the country through the Solidarity Party, led by Petro Poroshenko, who also heads the national campaign headquarters. He also brings balance to the bloc’s image because of his close ties to presidential circles.

Several smaller parties also have joined the coalition, such as the Liberal Party, the Christian Popular Union, the Youth Party, the Forward Ukraine Party, and the Republican Christian Party.

Despite the popularity of its leader, the bloc faces several obstacles in this campaign. It is not as well funded as its opponents, and is still in the process of forming a core campaign staff.

This parliamentary campaign also marks the beginning of a presidential campaign for Viktor Yushchenko. With a background as head of the National Bank and as Prime Minister, Yushchenko comes to these elections with experience as a government official.

**Top five on the party list:**

Viktor Yushchenko: Prime Minister from December 1999 until April 2001, when a parliamentary vote of no confidence led to his removal. Prior to his premiership, Viktor Yushchenko was President of the National Bank and in that capacity he carried out successful currency reform in Ukraine.

Olexander Stoyan: President of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine. He is also a currently member of parliament, where he sits on the Committee for Social Policy and Labor, and was elected to the 1994 parliament as well.

Hennady Udovenko: Leader of the Popular Movement of Ukraine (Rukh). He is a retired career diplomat who served as Ukraine’s representative to the United Nations (1977-1980) and as Minister of Foreign Affairs (1992-1994). Udovenko entered the political arena in 1997, when the late Rukh leader Vyacheslav Chernovil offered him the third position on the party list. He was elected to parliament in 1998 and now serves as Chair of the Committee for Human Rights and Inter-Ethnic Relations. Udovenko was a candidate in the 1999 presidential elections.

Yuri Kostenko: Won election to the parliament in 1990 and was appointed Minister of Environmental Protection and Nuclear Security in 1992. He was reelected to the parliament in 1994 and has served there since. In the winter of 1998-99, when internal conflict split Rukh, Kostenko assumed leadership of the second Rukh party, and launched his own 1999 presidential campaign.
Victor Pynzenyk: Leader of the Reforms and Order Party. Minister of the Economy from 1992-1994, when he was chosen to lead the country’s economic reform effort as Deputy Prime Minister. He resigned in 1997, complaining that his proposed reform measures were not being implemented. Pynzenyk won a single-mandate seat in 1998 and is now a member of the Committee on Banking and Finance.

C. Democratic Party of Ukraine – Democratic Union (#3 on the ballot)

The Democratic Party developed out of the original National Rukh movement for independence and democracy. Since it’s founding, the party has relied heavily on links to big business groups involved in Ukraine’s spirits industry. The bloc has experienced several leadership changes over the past several years. Despite the disruptions this has caused, the party will benefit in this election from considerable control over media resources and support from government circles. The party’s program supports continuing on the policies of the existing government.

Top five on the list.

Volodymyr Horbulin: Volodymyr Horbulin is the former head of the National Security Council and currently the head of the State Commission for the Military Industrial Complex. He is also the Democratic Union party leader.

Bohdan Shiba: Bohdan Shiba is the head of the regional administration of the Tura Region on the Volyn oblast.

Ivan Bilas: Ivan Bilas is a member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Vyacheslav Pihovshek: Vyacheslav Pihovshek is editor in chief of the news service of the ‘1+1’ television channel, and author, and the lead journalist on the political television show Epicenter.

Volodymyr Severnyuk: Volodymyr Severnyuk is the head of the Monitoring Council of the ‘AvtoKraz’ holding, and the former general director of Krivoi Roh State Metal Works, one of the largest enterprises in Ukraine.

D. Natalia Vitrenko Bloc (#5 on the ballot)

The Natalia Vitrenko bloc is dominated by the Progressive Socialist Party, headed by Natalia Vitrenko. The party competed in the 1998 elections, and crossed the threshold with 4.40 percent of the vote. The Progressive Socialist Party had one of the smallest factions in the parliament, but lost many members and eventually dissolved in early 2000.

The party was formed by Vitrenko in 1996, after her split from the Socialist Party. The party grew quickly in 1997, capitalizing on general discontent among older voters and the dissatisfaction of some Socialists with their party’s perceived shift to the right. The party portrays Ukraine as a country on the edge of catastrophe. The Progressive Socialist Party calls
for an immediate reversal of reforms and the imposition of total state regulation of the economy, including a state monopoly on foreign trade and the renewal of entitlements such as free education and health care. In the past, the party has also demanded a complete freeze on external debt payments, the severing of relations with the International Monetary Fund, and the re-acquisition of Ukraine’s nuclear arsenal as a defense against a possible NATO invasion.

*Top five on the list.*

Natalia Vitrienko: Elected to parliament in 1994, she has made a name for herself as an orthodox Leninist. Vitrienko was the only woman who ran in the 1999 presidential elections.

Volodymyr Marchenko: Left the Socialist party in 1996 and joined Vitrienko in forming the Progressive Socialist Party. He is a party leader and served as Vitrienko’s deputy during her presidential bid.

Lyudmila Bezuha: A member of the Progressive Socialist Party, elected to the Verkhovna Rada on the party list in 1998.

Petro Romanchuk: A deputy in the Verkhova Rada.

Mykhaylo Sydorchuk: A deputy in the Verkhovna Rada.

E. The Party of the Greens of Ukraine (#6 on the ballot)

Founded at a congress in Kyiv in 1990, the Party of Greens took almost 6 percent of the vote in 1998. There are 15 deputies in the party’s parliamentary faction, which tends to vote with pro-presidential factions. With the influx of influential businessmen from the oil-refining sector, the party no longer exhibits features characteristic of Green parties elsewhere, although in November 2001, the party did collect signatures in opposition to the transportation of spent nuclear fuel through Ukraine.

The party enjoys considerable resources, organizes public relations events, and runs regular television advertisements. The party expects to gather support mostly from young and apolitical voters. The party message focuses on the poor state of the environment in Ukraine.

*Top five on the party list.*

Vitaliy Kononov: Party of Greens chairman since 1992, and the leader of the faction in the parliament, Kononov was a presidential candidate in 1999.

Oleg Shevchuk: First deputy chairman of the party. In 1999, he was appointed to head the Ukrainian State Committee for Communications and Information, but was dismissed in mid-2000. Shevchuk is the director of the Institute of Information Society.

Serhiy Kurykin: Elected to parliament in 1998 and a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Deputy head of the Green Party on political issues. In June 2001, he was appointed Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources.

Yuri Samoilenko: Elected to parliament in 1998, he is a member of the Committee on Environmental Policy and Chairman of the Intemisterial Commission on Climate Change.

F. “Against All” Bloc (#7 on the ballot)

This bloc was registered in December 2001 and brings together two parties: the Patriotic Party and the Party of Small and Medium Business of Ukraine. Both members of the bloc are newcomers to politics. Their tactic has been to attract free media coverage by hosting controversial events that draw attention.

With their message, “Against All”, the bloc targets small businessmen and entrepreneurs who are not aligned with any of those political parties that have links to big business. The party’s name, however, may also serve to confuse voters who mean to select the box on the ballot indicating that they do not support any party or candidate. Generally, 7 to 10 percent of Ukrainian voters choose this option.

The bloc’s leader is Mykola Gaber. He was elected to parliament in 1998 off the Natalia Vitrenko party list. Other people on the party list include some of Gaber’s relatives.

G. The Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko (#10 on the ballot)

The Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko consists of seven parties. In addition to her own Batkivshchina (Motherland) party that has a faction in the parliament with 24 members, two other well-known parties in the bloc are Sobor (Assembly) and the Ukrainian Republican Party. The Confederation of Free Trade Unions is also an important participant in the bloc.

Along with the Socialist Party, the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko is one of the most consistent opponent of President Kuchma. The bloc’s leader has publicly accused the president of being authoritarian and corrupt, and attempted to launch a referendum for his impeachment. In its platform, the bloc expresses support for a market economy based on speedy privatization of state owned enterprises, private property and stronger laws on taxation. The bloc calls for the rule of law and greater freedom of expression. It calls for abolishing the presidency in favor of a parliamentary republic. In its foreign policy, the bloc would like to see Ukraine cooperate closely with the West, including the European Union and NATO.

Despite the unprecedented consolidation of parties in the run-up to this election, a seemingly natural partnership between the Tymoshenko bloc and Our Ukraine has not materialized. Yulia Tymoshenko appears to have favored such a move, but Viktor Yushchenko has been reluctant to
join forces with a group that resorts to regular anti-Kuchma rhetoric. In addition, some members of Our Ukraine bloc had business conflicts with Yulia Tymoshenko while others felt uneasy about her past links to Pavlo Lazarenko, a former prime minister who is now in a US prison on money laundering charges.

The bloc has had trouble printing its party newspaper as well as a private newspaper linked to Yulia Tymoshenko due to harassment from authorities. Also, it has been unable to find television stations willing to air its commercials.

Top five on the party list:

Yulia Tymoshenko: Leader of the Batkivshchina (Motherland) Party, and of the bloc that bears her name. Entered politics in 1997, when she won a seat in the parliament through a by-election. In 1998 she was reelected to the parliament. She was the Chair of the Budget Committee until her appointment to the cabinet as Deputy Prime Minister 1999. In February 2001 she was dismissed from the government by the president and arrested on charges of tax evasion and natural gas smuggling. Tymoshenko was released from prison after signing a pledge not to leave the capital. She enjoys high recognition among voters and gained even more public support and sympathy after her dismissal from the cabinet and subsequent incarceration. She has been under virtual house arrest since her release, and is prohibited from leaving Kyiv or Ukraine. Tymoshenko suffered serious injury in a car accident in January 2002.

Anatoly Matvienko: A mechanical engineer, Anatoly Matvienko was an active leader in the Komsomol, or Communist Youth wing, during the Soviet period. He was elected to parliament in 1990 and, after independence, became leader of the Labor Congress of Ukraine Party, which later became a constituent part of the National Democratic Party in 1996. For several years he held leadership positions in regional administrations. Matvienko was elected to parliament in 1998 and headed the National Democratic Party faction. He resigned from the party in 1999 because of the party's decision to support Kuchma in the presidential elections, and became the leader of the Ukrainian People's Party Sobor (Assembly).

Hryhoriy Omelchenko: First entered electoral politics in the 1990 Verkhovna Rada elections. He was reelected to parliament in 1998. Omelchenko is Chair of the Parliamentary Committee to Fight Organized Crime and Corruption, the Deputy Chair of the Sobo political party, and the former Head of the Department of the Military Counter-Intelligence of the Security Service of Ukraine. Omelchenko is a retired colonel.

Vasyl Onopenko: Elected to the parliament in 1998, founder of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party (United). Because of internal conflicts in the party, he left and went on to found the Social Democratic Party. Onopenko served as Minister of Justice from 1992 to 1995.

Levko Lukyanenko: Leader of the Ukrainian Republican Party. A veteran dissident who spent 25 years in Soviet prisons and camps. Lukyanenko is one of the co-founders of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group. He was elected to parliament in 1990, and authored the act declaring Ukraine an independent state in 1991. From 1992-1993, Lukyanenko served as Ukraine's first Ambassador to Canada.
H. The Socialist Party (#13 on the ballot)

The Socialist Party was founded in 1991. The party has a 17-member faction in the parliament. Since the 1994 elections, the Socialist Party has sought to move closer to a European-style social democratic orientation. It has worked to develop a regional network and regional newspapers.

One of the main goals of the party is to amend the Constitution to restrict presidential powers and turn Ukraine into a parliamentary republic. The party also advocates a strong social protection policy. Although the Socialist Party accepts private property as one of the fundamental features of a market economy, it opposes privatization of state owned enterprises and the right to sell land under the current system of government. The Socialist Party is viewed as supportive of the use, to some degree, of the Russian language in state institutions and advocates good relations with both Russia and the West. The party will seek to attract support from the social democratic, centrist, communist, and protest voters by concentrating its campaign in central Ukraine, and some eastern and northern oblasts.

The Socialist Party’s leader, Oleksandr Moroz, personally launched the presidential “tape scandal” in 2000. As a result of this scandal, the party is in open opposition to the president. Consequently, party members claim that they are harassed by the authorities. Some are in prison, some have reportedly been fired from their jobs and others have had their businesses closed. The Socialist Party has difficulty gaining access to state and private media and has problems finding willing printing houses for its newspaper. Companies and firms that support this party are prone to undue attention from tax authorities.

Top five on the party list.

Olexandr Moroz: Founder and chairman of the Socialist Party of Ukraine. In 1976 he began a career in the Communist Party. He won his first parliamentary seat in 1990. Moroz became speaker of the parliament in 1994. Moroz failed in his re-election bid for speaker in 1998. He was a candidate in the 1999 presidential election, and was viewed as a serious challenger to Kuchma, in part because of his image as a man untainted by business dealings.

Yuriy Lutsenko: Editor of “Hrani”, an opposition newspaper close to the Socialist Party. He rose to prominence through the leading role he played as coordinator of the now-defunct “Ukraine Without Kuchma” opposition movement. Lutsenko is the Political Council Secretary of the Socialist Party.

Valentyna Semenyuk: Elected to parliament in 1998, she is the leader of the Kyiv branch of the Socialist Party and attracted national attention due to injuries she sustained from policemen during the 2001 protests.

Ivan Bokyy: Elected to parliament in 1998 and is a member of the Socialist faction. He gained media attention in October 2000 when he prompted a walkout of the parliament in response to motions to close down the opposition Silski Visti (Rural News) newspaper.
Ivan Spodarenko: Editor of the *Rural News* newspaper, which is geared towards readership in the countryside.

I. For A United Ukraine (#14 on the ballot)

This bloc led by the head of the presidential administration, Volodymyr Lytvyn, consists of five parties, all representing the current Ukrainian establishment. Among their leaders are many current and former government ministers, governors and other national and local administrators. Ukraine’s current prime minister is second on the party list. President Kuchma has given the leadership of this bloc public endorsement on several occasions; his son-in-law is a member of the bloc.

A major player in the bloc is the National Democratic Party, led by former prime minister and current Minister of Transportation, Valery Pustovoitenko. Until recently, the party was considered the “party of power,” a status that it now shares with several other organizations.

The Labor Ukraine Party, a faction with 48 members in the parliament, is another important bloc party. The party is led by deputy Serhiy Tyhpyko, who was vice prime minister in the Pustovoytenko government, and then minister of the Economy in the Yushchenko cabinet. A former banker, Tyhpyko is someone with presidential ambitions. Despite its name, Labor Ukraine essentially represents bankers and big business.

Other important bloc members are the Agrarian Party led by the Governor of Lviv Oblast, which speaks for the administration in the countryside, including the former bureaucracy of Soviet collective farms; and the Party of Regions, with 23 members in the parliament. Mykola Azarov, the head of the State Tax Administration, reportedly plays an important behind-the-scenes role in this party, which represents the interests of the Donetsk regional business group.

Opinion polls show this bloc hovering just above the 4 percent necessary for party list representation.

The bloc supports the policies of the current government and says it supports market reforms and democracy. The group supports strong ties with Russia.

*Top five on the party list*

Volodymyr Lytvyn: In November 1999, President Kuchma appointed Volodymyr Lytvyn head of his administration. Previously, Lytvyn was an aide to the president. From 1994 to 1996 he was deputy head of the presidential administration. From 1986 to 1989 Lytvyn was a department head at the Ministry of Education. Lytvyn is the leader of the bloc.

Anatoliy Kinakh: Currently Ukraine’s prime minister. He entered politics in 1990, when he was elected to the parliament. From 1992 to 1995 Kinakh was the head of a regional state administration, after which he served as vice prime minister of Ukraine on industrial policy. In
1996 he became president of the Ukrainian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, while continuing to advise the president on industrial policy. In 1998, Kinakh was elected to the Verkhovna Rada and became Chair of the Committee on Industrial Policy. In 1999 he served as the vice prime minister of Ukraine, and became prime minister in May 2001.

Kateryna Vashchuk: Elected to parliament in 1998, she is the Chair of the Committee on Agrarian Reform. She is also the deputy head of the Agrarian Party of Ukraine.

Volodymyr Boiko: Director of Mariupol Steel Works, one of the biggest enterprises in Ukraine, located in the Donetsk oblast, member of the Party of Regions.

Victor Skopenko: Rector of the Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv and a member of the Party of Entrepreneurs and Industrialists of Ukraine.

J. Unity (#15 on the ballot)

The Unity Party was established by Kyiv’s Mayor, Olexandr Omelchenko in the summer of 2000. As a result, the party can expect much of its support to come from Kyiv. Since the parliamentary elections coincide with the local elections, Omelchenko is simultaneously running for mayor and as the first candidate on the Unity party list. Throughout 2001, there was the possibility of an alliance between Unity and various other parties, including the Our Ukraine bloc. However Unity did not, in the end, join the Yushchenko bloc.

Unity’s chances of crossing the 4 percent threshold are slim. However, the party’s campaign will give publicity and support to Omelchenko’s bid for re-election as Mayor. The party should not face difficulty in gaining access to media because most newspapers and television channels are headquartered in Kyiv.

The Unity Party has expressed its support for a market economy with considerable state and municipal involvement. The party emphasizes the importance of Ukrainian culture, including promoting the use of the Ukrainian language. The Unity faction in the parliament, made up of 21 deputies, has been vocal about lifting parliamentary immunity.

In addition to the first five people, the Unity Party list includes some well-known personalities, such as actor and former Minister of Culture and Education Bohdan Stupka, former Prime Minister Vitali Masol, and the leader of trade unions of Kyiv Mykola Veres. The party will benefit from the resources of the Mayor, and his access to Kyiv and the Union of Ukrainian Cities.

Top five on the party list.

Olexandr Omelchenko: Prior to becoming Kyiv Mayor, Olexandr Omelchenko was appointed by the President as chairman of the Kyiv city regional administration. At the same time, he was head of the city council. In 1998, he was elected Mayor by Kyiv council deputies. In May 1999, Omelchenko was elected Mayor again, this time in direct elections.
Vitali Boiko: Chairman of the Supreme Court of Ukraine and a well-respected judge in Ukraine who has a reputation for unbiased and independent judgments.

Nina Matvienko: A folk singer.

Serhiy Chervonopysky: Chairman of the State Committee of Veterans' Affairs.

Olexandr Shalimov: Director of the Institute for Microsurgery and a prominent surgeon in Ukraine.

K. Winter Crop Generation Bloc (#20 on the ballot)

The Winter Crop Generation bloc is made up of four parties, the Peasant Democratic Party, Liberal-Democratic Party, Constitutional-Democratic Party and the Private Property Party. The four groups have expressed their intention of joining into one party after the elections. The bloc's ideology is focused on attracting a new generation of leaders and policy makers into all levels of government. The party describes itself as liberal and pro-market, and places emphasis on "liberating" the individual, by, for example, introducing dual citizenship in Ukraine. The party also promotes limited state intervention in the private sector, a simplified tax code to encourage small business development, and decentralized government. The Winter Crop Generation bloc has made effective use of the internet and television to spread its name, and used its web site to recruit volunteers to compete for the top posts on the party list. This new group hopes to garner over 10 percent of the vote, though this is highly unlikely. The party leader has stated that he plans to keep his election strategy secret.

Top five on the list:

Valeriy Khoroshkovsky, the leader of the bloc, was elected to parliament in 1998 from a single-mandate constituency in Crimea. Besides Khoroshkovsky, whose background is in business, other participants in the project who are placed high on the party list include Rada deputy and bloc co-founder, Inna Bohoslovskaya; founder of the Galaktion dairy concern, Vadym Hurzhos; and founder of the Kharkiv laundry chain, Iryna Horyna. The rest of the party list consists of several younger members, most of whom are new to politics. Part of the party list was composed by a competition over the internet.

L. The Social Democratic Party (United) (#23 on the ballot)

Until recently the Social Democratic Party (United) (SDPU (u)) was a strong ally of the current establishment. The party membership features a range of high-ranking government officials, and is headed by the former first deputy speaker of the parliament, Viktor Medvedchuk. A strain in relations between this party and the executive branch of government began during the tapes scandal of 2000. Although its name implies that it might be a workers' party, it is actually backed by two wealthy and influential Kyiv businessmen, Viktor Medvedchuk and Grigoriy
Surkis. These and other businessmen close to this party, control, directly or indirectly, a sizeable portion of Ukraine’s media, including nation-wide television channels. The faction has 32 members in the current parliament.

The SDPU(u) has invested considerable effort and resources in developing a national network and building membership, since the 1998 elections, when the party just barely crossed the threshold with 4.43 percent of the vote and won 18 single-mandate seats. The SDPU (u) has a reputation of being pro-Russian, has called for the introduction of Russian as a second state language in Ukraine and, as a result, has many supporters in eastern Ukraine.

In its campaign, SDPU (u) is presenting a social democracy platform. Its faction in the parliament has a record of voting for pro-market bills. However, it was a firm opponent of former Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko’s reforms.

Top five on the party list

Viktor Medvedchuk: Entered electoral politics in 1996, when he joined SDPU (u) and was elected to the parliament in 1997 in a bi-election. He was re-elected in 1998, and took the post of Deputy Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada until December 2001, when he was removed. Since 1998 Medvedchuk has been the leader of SDPU (u).

Tamara Proshkuratova: A school teacher.

Olexandr Zinchenko: A member of the SDPU(u) since 1996, elected to parliament in 1998, when he became the deputy head of the party and the leader of the SDPU (u) faction in the parliament. Zinchenko is also the Chair of the parliamentary Committee for Freedom of Speech and Information. Prior to entering politics, Zinchenko directed the third national television station, of which he is still honorary president.

Volodymyr Ryabika: Head of the Ukrainian National Committee for Youth Organizations.

Leonid Kravchuk: The first popularly elected president of independent Ukraine (1991-1994). He was subsequently elected to parliament and is a member of the Committee for Foreign Affairs. Prior to being elected president, Kravchuk was the Chairman of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet. He is also one of the founders of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

M. The Election Bloc of the National Rukh of Ukraine (for Unity) (#24 on the ballot)

The National Rukh for Unity party, which has registered for these elections as Popular Rukh of Ukraine, was created in November 2000 and is officially headed by three co-chairmen, Bohdan Boiko, Hryhory Filipchuk and Eduard Krech; Boiko is the party’s most visible leader.

This party formed belatedly out of the split of the original Rukh movement. Both splinter groups of the original Rukh movement are now members of the Our Ukraine bloc. The leaders of this “third” Rukh, although involved in the Rukh movement for some time, seem intent on using
publicity made possible by its support from government circles to embarrass the reform component of Rukh.

The third Rukh came into limelight in the summer of 2001. In an effort to weaken the budding of the right of center coalition in the bloc of Our Ukraine, the third Rukh encouraged all three Rukhs to reunite and run together. The third Rukh will be the only Rukh remaining on the ballot.

Boiko’s Rukh party is well-funded by its supporters. The party characterizes itself as right of center, and is expected to draw votes away from the Yushchenko bloc. The struggle over the party’s name, and subsequent variants of it, may confuse voters at the polls.

*Top five on the list.*

**Bohdan Boiko:** Member of parliament, co-leader of the party Rukh for Unity

**Georgi Filipchuk:** Member of Parliament, co-leader of the party Rukh for Unity

Andriy Chornovil: Son of Vyacheslav Chornovil, the founder and leader of the National Rukh of Ukraine, until his death in a suspicious car accident in 1999. His brother, Taras Chornovil, is an important member of the leadership of Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine and has denounced Andriy’s candidacy. Previously unknown in politics, Andriy Chornovil brings his father’s notable name to the third Rukh’s party list.

Georgy Rohoza: A media producer, he is also the leader of the All-Ukrainian Alliance ‘Center’ which has joined the bloc of the third Rukh.

Serhiy Konev: The former leader of the National Rukh of Ukraine, led by Udovenko, in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.

**N. Bloc “ZUBR” (“For Ukraine, Belarus and Russia”) (#26 on the ballot)**

The bloc was registered in January 2002 and consists of two political parties, Light For the East and Union of Labor. This bloc is known in Ukraine for its strong anti-American stance. The bloc promotes the unification of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia into one state. ZUBR calls for a referendum on unification in all three countries. The bloc frequently uses the discourse of nostalgia for the Soviet Union.

The bloc’s leader, Olexandr Charodeyev, was elected to parliament in 1998 off the Natalia Vitrenko list. Although the group does not have a regional network, Charodeyev has been traveling around the country to meet with groups of voters in small towns.

**O. Russian Bloc (#30 on the ballot)**
The Russian bloc was created in July 2001 by three of Ukraine’s Russian nationalist and pan-Slavic groups, the Lviv-based Russian Movement of Ukraine, the Crimean-based Union (Soyuz) party, and the Russian-Ukrainian Union party. The bloc aims to defend the rights of Russian-speakers in Ukraine. Russian nationalists in Ukraine also tend to oppose Ukraine’s integration with the West and see Russia as the obvious leader of countries with Slavic roots. The party opposed any affirmative actions for Ukrainian nation-building.

Russian nationalist parties have not been successful in mobilizing the Russian vote in other former Soviet Republics. In Ukraine, whatever Russian nationalist vote there is will be divided in these elections between this party and the For a Union of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia (ZUBR) party (see below).

The Russian bloc recently experienced an arson attack at its Kyiv headquarters. The attack was preceded by earlier assaults across Ukraine against Russian nationalists, including regional activists of this party.

Top five on the list.

Olexsandr Svistunov: Olexsandr Svistunov is head of the Russian Bloc and the president of the Russian Movement in Ukraine.

Ivan Simonenko: Ivan Simonenko is the leader of the Russian-Ukrainian Union Party.

Oleh Lutikov: Oleh Lutikov is the editor at a publishing house called ‘Civilization’

Ihor Plaev: Ihor Plaev is a consultant for the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Svitlana Savchenko: Svitlana Savchenko is the leader of the Union Party in Crimea.

P. All-Ukrainian Political Alliance Women for the Future (#31 on the ballot)

This organization is a coalition of several women’s groups, including the Union of Ukrainian Women in which Ludmila Kuchma, the President’s wife, is involved. Women for the Future has done well in recent public opinion polls.

The party calls for greater emphasis on women’s rights, social security and support for families. The bloc enjoys considerable publicity, and has developed an effective campaigning strategy that involves direct contact with the voters.

Recently, the press reported differences between the bloc and its major donor, who is at the same time one of the leaders of the Green Party, regarding the role and the influence of Mrs. Kuchma in the bloc.

Top five on the party list.
Valentyna Dovzhenko: Leader of the organization. She is also the head of the State Committee for Family and Youth Affairs. Her other positions include Representative of Ukraine in the United Nations Children Fund (UNESCO), and Chair of the Board of the Ukrainian Welfare Foundation of Hope and Goodness. (Ludmila Kuchma is an active participant in this foundation.)

Maria Orlyk: Leader of the Union of Women of Ukraine and a former Deputy Prime Minister of the Ukrainian SSR.

Irina Bilousova: Deputy leader of the Women for the Future.

Tetyana Selikhova: Director of the Dynamo-Sileyer plant.

Andriy Ivanov: Member of the board, and influential businessman who is a major donor to the group.

Q. Yabluko (Apple) (#32 on the ballot)

The Yabluko (Apple) Party derives its name from the Russian Yabluko party, though the purpose for choosing this name is unclear. The party is viewed as an affiliate of the SDPU(u) even though there are signs of tensions between the two parties and their leaders. With a program similar to SDPU(u), Yabloko seeks to attract support from a younger audience To cater to this group, the party attempts to incorporate humor into its campaign and has organized glitzy media events. Yabloko also has a faction in the parliament, with 14 members.

Yabloko is generally supportive of the current administration. The party’s leaders, many with business connections, maintain good relations with the government. However, the group has become more critical recently.

Top five on party list:

Mikhail Brodsky: Founder of the Yabloko Party, Brodsky is one of the wealthiest businessmen in Ukraine. Prior to the 1998 elections, while a member of the Kyiv City Council, Brodsky was arrested on charges of illegal trade deals. Many analysts believed his arrest was an attempt by government officials to curtail Brodsky’s critical views, expressed through his own media holdings. Brodsky was released on the grounds of parliamentary immunity, and went on to lead his faction in the Verkhovna Rada. Brodsky is also the Chair of the Committee for Industry and Entrepreneurship.

Viktor Chaika: Leader of the Yabloko Party, and a member of parliament, who sits on the Committee for Industry and Entrepreneurship.

Dmytro Vydrin: A political analyst and the Director of the Institute for European Integration and Development. From 1994 to 1995 he served as advisor to President Kuchma on domestic policy.
Serhiy Odarich: Director of a center called “Ukrainian Perspectives.” Odarich is also the editor-in-chief of the newspaper My.

Olexiy Danilov: A faculty member of the East Ukrainian University

R. New Generation Party (#33 on the ballot)

This party was registered in 2000 by a group of young people supported by the current Prime Minister Anatoliy Kinakh. The party has enjoyed financial support from various groups from the oil-refining business in western Ukraine.

The New Generation Party came into the limelight when the party organized mass student protests demanding the resignation of the Yushchenko cabinet in 2000-2001. Despite this strong criticism, the party approached Yushchenko after his resignation, requesting to join the Our Ukraine bloc. Yushchenko denied this request. The party will be running independently in these elections.

The party seeks to attract the support of young voters. Its message calls for ushering in a new generation of young leaders, and adopting European models of government. Since 2001, New Generation has been running an aggressive media advertising campaign. The party does not use direct voter contact, preferring to organize through the media and hosting events for the youth.

The party leader is Yuriy Miroshnichenko, who has a background in economics and used to work with Kinakh in the League of Ukrainian Industrialists and Entrepreneurs.

S. Other Groups

In addition to the above mentioned parties, other groups which have registered lists with the CEC include:

#3 – All-Ukrainian Union of Christians
#8 – Communist Party of Workers and Peasants
#9 – “New Force”
#11 – Party of Rehabilitated
#12 – Communist Party of Ukraine (united)
#16 – All-Ukrainian Party of Works
#17 – Liberal Party (renovated)
#18 – “New World” Bloc
#19 – All-Ukrainian Union of Leftists “Justice”
#21 – Party of Social Defense
#22 – Peasant’s Party
#25 – Ukrainian National Assembly
#27 – Marine Party of Ukraine
#28 – Party of Christian Movement
V.  **NDI's WORK IN UKRAINE**

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

NDI is committed to providing long-term assistance to democratic political development in Ukraine. Since establishing a field office in Kyiv in 1992, NDI programs have sought to support the organizational development of political parties and civic groups. These programs are funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the National Endowment for Democracy, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

NDI’s work with political parties has been designed to help develop platforms, internal democratic structures and bases of support. NDI has also assisted party efforts to forge links between national and regional branches.

NDI has provided technical assistance to the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU), a nonpartisan election-monitoring group established in 1994. CVU fielded more than 17,000 domestic monitors throughout Ukraine in both the 1998 parliamentary elections and October 1999 presidential elections. In addition to election-monitoring CVU now advocates for election law reform, and accountability and transparency. It conducts public education campaigns in cities and towns throughout Ukraine that help ordinary people understand and exercise their rights to hold government officials accountable. NDI also provides training to other civic organizations on advocacy and other skills and administers a seed grant program to small, regional civic groups promoting government accessibility.

NDI also seeks to strengthen the cohesiveness of political factions within the parliament to help their deputies maintain contact with their constituents. NDI has conducted training sessions with parliamentarians from coalitions and Verkhovna Rada committees that focus on expanding constituent contact, strengthening party relations and promoting cohesion and cooperation within and among factions.

VI.  **APPENDIX – STATEMENT OF THE NDI PRE-ELECTION DELEGATION TO THE MARCH 31 ELECTIONS IN UKRAINE**

*Kyiv, February 17, 2002*

This statement is offered by an international pre-election delegation headed by NDI Chairman and former U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine K. Albright. The delegation includes: NDI President Kenneth Wollack; former U.S. Congressman Sam Gejdenson; former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, Bill Miller; a former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Cedric Thornberry; Director of Georgetown University’s Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Casimir Yost; former Advisor to the President of the National Assembly of Slovenia, Mjusa Sever; international trade consultant Robin Carnahan; and NDI Senior Advisor Laura Jewett.

SUMMARY CONCLUSION

At this moment, it is unclear whether the March 31 elections will mark a step forward for Ukraine’s democratic future. Despite significant improvements in the election law, the delegation is concerned about how those laws are being applied. Most significantly, the delegation observed or received credible reports of intimidation of journalists, denial of access to the media, unbalanced news coverage, and abuse of power and illegal use of public funds and facilities. Immediate steps need to be taken, primarily by government authorities, to reverse the historical trend of seriously flawed elections in Ukraine and to build public confidence in the country’s political system.

A strong, independent, democratic and prosperous Ukraine is vital not only to the citizens of the country but to the stability and development of the entire region. Therefore, the election process, as a means to advance and deepen democracy, has drawn the attention of the international community. Ukrainians with whom the delegation met defined the conduct of these elections as pivotal for Ukraine and a determinant of its place in the community of democracies.

THE DELEGATION AND ITS WORK

The purposes of NDI’s multinational delegation are to demonstrate the international community’s interest and support for a genuine democratic election process in Ukraine, and report on the environment surrounding the March 31, 2002 parliamentary and local elections, and preparations for the polls.

The delegation conducted more than 70 meetings in different regions of the country. These included meetings with government officials at all levels, including President Leonid Kuchma, election officials, leaders of political parties, candidates, and representatives of the news media and civic organizations. The delegation would like to express its appreciation to all those with whom it met for their warm reception and for sharing their insights.

The methodology of NDI for monitoring elections is based on the premise that all aspects of the process must be considered to accurately assess an election. This includes the period leading up to election day and the broader political environment in which an election takes place. At the same time, NDI recognizes that it is ultimately the people of Ukraine who will judge the conduct of the elections.

NDI has conducted similar pre-election missions in dozens of countries in every region of the world. The Institute has been working in Ukraine since 1992 to support the development of democratic processes and institutions. The Ukrainian government, political parties and civic organizations have welcomed this and other international observer efforts.
BACKGROUND

Ukraine’s presidential election in 1994 resulted in a peaceful transfer of power. Unfortunately, subsequent elections were increasingly marred by procedural irregularities and violations of political rights that called into question the integrity of the process. The international community and local observers noted that the 1998 parliamentary elections and the 1999 presidential elections were characterized by politically motivated violence and intimidation, media bias and abuse of public office, and legal and administrative problems. The integrity of the 2000 referendum was called into particular question by falsified signatures, abuses of early voting, and inflated voter turnout. The electoral history has undermined public confidence in the country’s political processes. This is reflected in recent public opinion polls showing that there are more people who believe the upcoming elections will be unfair than people who believe they will be fair.

International experience demonstrates that in countries where doubts have been raised about the conduct of elections in the past, as is the case in Ukraine, it is necessary to take extraordinary steps to build or restore public trust in the process. Confidence in the electoral system and the perception of its fairness are as important as the letter of the law.

OBSERVATIONS

The 2002 parliamentary election law incorporates a number of positive changes that provide opportunities for a more democratic electoral process. It spells out rights for party, candidate and international observers. It provides for multi-party representation on election commissions. It calls for equal opportunities for all electoral contestants and equal access for them to the media. It sets rules for posting protocols of results at polling stations. It outlines rights of appeal and specifies administrative penalties for violations.

Regrettably, the opportunities created by these legal changes are not being realized in a number of significant areas, and the election law still fails to meet Ukraine’s international commitments in at least one important respect: the right of citizens to act as nonpartisan domestic monitors on election day. The delegation was most concerned about the following violations of the letter and spirit of the law:

Access to the news media and coverage of the election

- some media outlets, critical of government or business interests, have been subjected to harassment, including financial investigations, and abrupt suspension of licenses;
- journalists have been subjected to intimidation and violence;
- the state-controlled media have demonstrated a pro-government bias;
- candidates have been denied the opportunity to purchase paid advertising time.

The use of “administrative resources”

The term “administrative resources,” which is widely used in Ukraine, is meant to describe abuses of power and illegal expenditure of public funds by government authorities.
• government spaces have been used for campaign purposes;
• public employees have been working on political campaigns and citizens have been pressured to join parties or blocs, or to work for certain candidates;
• government authorities have interfered in campaigns;
• government authorities have denied public facilities and services to candidates, parties or blocs.

These problems undermine the perceived independence of those overseeing election procedures, advantage some participants over others and deny voters the information and freedom required to make informed political decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Reflecting its discussions with Ukrainians, and in the spirit of international cooperation, the delegation would offer recommendations to help improve the prospects for credible elections on March 31. Beyond the legal framework, political will is now necessary to create a democratic environment in the remaining weeks of the campaign.

The responsibility for addressing many of the problems outlined above lies disproportionately with government authorities. They must use all means at their disposal to educate employees at all levels about their responsibilities under the election law. They should compel government officials and state institutions, including the media, to comply with the letter and spirit of provisions of the law that require strict impartiality toward all political parties, blocs and candidates, that prohibit interference with the election process and that bar the use of state resources for the advantage of particular electoral contestants. They should investigate expeditiously all credible reports of improprieties and violations, and be prepared to impose swift disciplinary action.

Additionally, candidates, political parties and blocs, civic groups and individual citizens should make use of electoral complaint mechanisms to bring matters before appropriate law enforcement bodies for prompt review and resolution. They should work cooperatively, along with government authorities, to support the work of journalists to combat an environment of fear and intimidation.

The delegation noted significant confusion surrounding the new election law and procedures in meetings at the district level. We recognize that it is early in the campaign period and many planned training and education programs are not yet underway. Nevertheless, poorly administered elections can create opportunities for misconduct. Given the new law and the number of elections taking place on March 31, the Central Election Commission and relevant NGOs should redouble their efforts to train and support commissioners and pollwatchers so they can fulfill their duties professionally and efficiently.

CONCLUSION
The delegation was inspired by the dedication and engagement of many party activists and candidates, who have sought to offer voters a range of choices. Equally impressive has been the work of civic activists, who have sought to promote and protect the integrity of the election process. In particular, the long-term observer effort by the Committee of Voters of Ukraine has made an important contribution to the understanding of challenges that must be overcome prior to election day. The work of NGOs to educate the citizenry, solve local problems, shape national policies, and hold their elected representatives accountable contributes measurably to the political life of the country. These political and civic activists represent the greatest hope for Ukraine’s democratic future.

An election that allows parties and candidates to compete on a level playing field, gives voters the news and information they need to make informed decisions and provides citizens with confidence that their ballots will be counted accurately would provide the foundation for public trust in government and would signal a clear commitment to a democratic course for Ukraine.