

Get Ready, World: Ukraine Is Being Torn to Shreds

Мир, готуйся: Україну рвуть на частини

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За результатами парламентських виборів на Україні, які відбулися 26 жовтня, майже три чверті місць у Раді дісталася проєвропейським по видимості партіям, і це викликало радість в американських рядах непохитних прихильників Євромайдану. Як повідомляється в редакційній статті National Review, «комментаторам-» реалістам "буде важко зобразити результати парламентських виборів на Україні як черговий триумф послідовника Макіавеллі з оголеним торсом Володимира Путіна». Дійсно, це було б важко, будь у реалістів якийсь інтерес до таких дій. Але їм достатньо фактів і чесного аналізу, пише автор статті.

The results from the Ukrainian parliamentary elections on October 26, which saw nearly three quarters of the seats go to ostensibly pro-European parties, was the cause of much rejoicing among America's stalwart Euro-Maidan enthusiasts. According to a National Review editorial, "it will be hard for 'realist' commentators to spin the results of Ukraine's parliamentary elections as another triumph for the bare-chested Machiavellian Vladimir Putin." And indeed it would, in the rather unlikely event any realists were interested in so doing; for realists, however, facts and honest analysis will suffice.

It is no doubt true that the pro-European parties walked away with a convincing plurality and, according to NR, "a pro-Russian opposition bloc, including politicians from the former Regions party . . . won less than 8 percent of the vote." A further bonus: "Communists won't be in the next parliament at all." Left unmentioned by Lexington Avenue's new generation of cold warriors was that in the run-up to the election, members of the Ukrainian opposition parties faced serial incidents of violence and intimidation by Ukraine's putative standard bearers of Western values.

Nevertheless, the view of the Washington establishment was reliably reflected by a Foreign Policy headline that flatly declared: "Ukraine Wins." And apparently, much like at NR, the specter of Communism still haunts the halls of FP, which dutifully informed readers that "The election was historic for several reasons, not the

least of which is that it will be the first Ukrainian parliament since the Bolshevik Revolution that doesn't include the Communist Party.”

And yet, despite the long-delayed defeat of those insidious Ukrainian Reds, the rejoicing may be premature for two reasons, the first having to do with the other story the election results tell. Far from showing a united Ukraine, the results show a deepening of the divisions between the pro-EU West and the rather more skeptical populations of the country's south and east. The turnout helps tell the tale. Nationally, turnout was just over 52 percent, yet on average, tracked lower in both the southeastern oblasts and in two western oblasts with significant populations of ethnic Romanians and Hungarians. The turnout in the northwestern oblasts, the primary base of support for Prime Minister Yatsenyuk's People's Front, was significantly higher, reaching 70 percent in Lviv.

A second reason the October 26 results should be viewed with a healthy dose of caution is that the party more disposed to pursue a peaceable policy with regard to the breakaway regions—President Petro Poroshenko's eponymously named Poroshenko Bloc—did rather less well than had been expected, coming in a close second to the People's Front. While it is true Poroshenko quickly pledged his party's support for Yatsenyuk to remain in his post as prime minister, the maneuvering between the rival Yatsenyuk and Poroshenko factions echo the unhappily arranged marriage between Viktor Yushchenko and Yulia Tymoshenko in the aftermath of the Orange Revolution in 2004-05. We have, I'm afraid, seen this movie before.

The contest, then, could reasonably be characterized as a contest won by the war hawks, led by Yatsenyuk, over the doves, led by Poroshenko. Little noted in Western media is the true extent of Yatsenyuk's anti-Russian hawkishness. According to the University of Michigan's Pietro Shakarian, “Yatsenyuk's main pet project has been the construction of a large Berlin Wall-style rampart along the entire Russo-Ukrainian border.” And so while it is true that pro-EU parties did resoundingly well, what is also true is that the elections show a hardening and deepening of the divisions within Ukraine.

Making a bad situation worse, the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Luhansk and Donetsk held their own set of parliamentary and presidential elections this past Sunday. European leaders were quick to condemn the elections as a violation of both the September 5 Minsk ceasefire agreement and the Ukrainian constitution. Russia, worryingly, though not surprisingly, has recognized the results. The ramifications of the two elections—one legitimate, one not—are clear. The partition of Ukraine is now—barring the extraordinarily unlikely event of a full-scale military intervention by the West—an established fact that will not be undone for the foreseeable future.