

## **The Challenges Facing Modern Ukraine: Oligarchy**

Serhiy Leshchenko

Modern-day Ukraine faces myriad challenges; chief among them is corruption and its derivative, oligarchy. By and large, Russia's aggression in Crimea and eastern Ukraine was enabled by oligarchy. Corruption destroyed Ukraine's armed forces and thus deprived the country of the ability to defend itself effectively. It was corruption that allowed Viktor Yanukovich to take power. His reign proved catastrophic for Ukraine: his presidency oversaw deaths in the Maidan and in the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) zone, loss of part of the country's territory, and profound economic crisis.

According to a rating from Transparency International, Ukraine ranks 142<sup>nd</sup> in the world for corruption, sharing this dubious honor with the Comoros and Uganda.<sup>1</sup> Opinion polls have shown that 43 percent of Ukrainian citizens consider corruption among public officials the second most pressing problem in Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> Only Russia's aggression in the east concerns Ukrainians more.

Corruption filters through all levels of Ukrainian life. Without it, it's equally impossible to place a child in kindergarten and to secure a contract to supply petroleum products to state-owned enterprises. Moreover, corruption significantly complicates Ukraine's recovery efforts because foreign investors are wary of placing their money in the country. Because of corruption, 3G technology hasn't been implemented for a decade, reducing citizens' quality of life. And it is because of corruption that western partners refuse to supply Ukraine with high-tech weapons, lest they be sent to a third party or embezzled entirely.

### **Corruption and Oligarchy**

Corruption prefigured the rise of the Ukrainian oligarchy, which then became its primary beneficiary. During Yanukovich's reign, oligarchs felt less self-confident than after his fall, because Yanukovich was a super-oligarch who subjugated the entire oligarch class and gave each one his patronage in a different area. For example, he allocated energy and metal to Rinat Akhmetov, the chemical and titanium industry to Dmytro Firtash, and oil and other petroleum products to Ihor Kolomois'kyi and Serhiy Kurchenko.

Each oligarch possessed all the prerequisites for widespread influence: media assets, soccer teams, and influence over regional, religious, and even criminal networks. However, they were strictly subordinated to Yanukovich and were forbidden to operate independently. Only after the beginning of the Maidan protests (the Revolution of

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<sup>1</sup> "Corruption Perceptions Index 2014: Results." Transparency International, 2014.  
<http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results>

<sup>2</sup> Public opinion poll carried out between July 16-30, 2015 by the sociology group "Rating" on behalf of the International Republican Institute.

Dignity) did the oligarchs begin their vast political gamble of playing on two fronts, supporting both the regime and the opposition, in an attempt to hedge their bets for retaining power once the storm blew over.

After Yanukovich's flight, the oligarchs were left to their own devices, flexing their muscles; his absence reinforced each remaining oligarch's influence on politics. They have already formed their own groups in parliament with no regard for the president, with the aim of protecting the clan's interests. More powerful than the others is Ihor Kolomois'kyi, owner of the broadcaster 1 + 1, who consolidated power after the Maidan, and personally stepped into a government post: he became governor of the Dnipropetrovsk oblast. Kolomois'kyi's example clearly demonstrates all the risks associated with the "oligarchization" of politics.

Kolomois'kyi's administration allocated funding for the "Dnipro" battalion, designed to defend in case of attack by pro-Russian armed forces from the Donetsk oblast. However, over time, discussions arose over whom this force owed its allegiance—to the military leadership of Ukraine or to the oligarch. Thus originated the term "private army," and regional officials, subordinates of Kolomois'kyi, did not hesitate to publicly blackmail President Poroshenko. Should Kolomois'kyi be removed from office, they have threatened that the Dnipro battalion will engage in guerilla warfare.<sup>3</sup>

Kolomois'kyi finally crossed the line in March 2015. He led an armed force of men who identified themselves as soldiers of the Dnipro battalion to defend his oligarchic interests in the company Ukrnafta.<sup>4</sup> While the controlling stake in Ukrnafta belongs to the state, 12 years ago Kolomois'kyi appointed his men to its leadership through bribery.<sup>5</sup>

This attempt to defend oligarchic interests resulted in Kolomois'kyi's resignation. After all, he had defied President Poroshenko, who, according to the Ukrainian constitution, has a monopoly over the command of armed forces to defend social interests. After that, attacks were mounted on Kolomois'kyi's interests on many fronts. He was removed from the management of the company "Ukrtransnafta," which operates an oil pipeline in Ukraine. The monitoring which began after that showed the extent of the abuse perpetrated by Kolomois'kyi's team. Deposits of over 100 million dollars were placed in

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<sup>3</sup> For a statement by the Deputy Head of Dnipropetrovsk Regional Administration Boris Filatov on Facebook, see: <http://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/leschenko/53bc130dded17/>

<sup>4</sup> "Vkhod v 'UkrNaftu' zablokirovali vooruzhennyye lyudi. Predstavilis' boitsami 'Dnepr-1.'" *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (March 22, 2015).

<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2015/03/22/7062318/>

<sup>5</sup> Mustafa Nayyem, "Plennykh ne brat": Viktor Pinchuk protiv Igorya Kolomoiskogo." *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (October 21, 2013).

<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2013/10/21/7000347/>

the oligarch's private bank, PrivatBank, and for overseeing the state-owned oil, Kolomois'kyi received 4 million dollars each month.<sup>6</sup>

In June, another blow was dealt to the oligarch's interests when President Poroshenko fired his protégé Kolomois'kyi as governor of the Odessa oblast and replaced him with former Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili. In response, Kolomois'kyi launched an aggressive media campaign against Odessa's new governor.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from Kolomois'kyi, significant losses in 2015 happened with another clan, comprised of the holders of the shady gas company RosUkrEnergo, Dmytro Firtash and Serhiy Levochkin. Firtash, for whom the FBI has issued a worldwide arrest warrant,<sup>8</sup> controls the channel "Inter," which is the most popular in eastern Ukraine. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has brought criminal charges against Firtash concerning his relations with the companies OSTCHEM and Centragas Holding AG.<sup>9</sup>

Rinat Akhmetov, who, along with Viktor Yanukovych, founded the Donetsk clan, has also begun to encounter problems. Akhmetov lost his influence after the annexation of part of the territory in eastern Ukraine, which has now been infiltrated by puppets of the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) and Donetsk People's Republic (DNR). Furthermore, the new government is trying to rein in Akhmetov's monopoly on the energy market—under Yanukovych, he had bought a thermal power plants, having first increased the threshold concentration from 25 percent to 33 percent through his puppet-officials.<sup>10</sup>

## War and Populism

The greatest challenge facing the country is the war, which began in eastern Ukraine in the spring of 2014, when the LNR and DNR were formed with the backing of Russian armed forces. More than 6,000 people died, only according to official estimates, and of that number, 2,000 were members of the Ukrainian military. About 1.5 million

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<sup>6</sup> "“Naftogaz’ ozvuchil pretenzii k otstrannennomu rukovoditelyu ‘Ukrtransnafty.’” *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (March 20, 2015).

<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2015/03/20/7062149/>

<sup>7</sup> On the issue of 1 + 1 against Saakashvili, see “Zhurnalists iz Gruzii rasskazal kak ‘1 + 1’ iskazali syuzhet o Saakashvili.” *InfoResist* (June 8, 2015). <http://inforesist.org/zhurnalists-iz-gruzii-rasskazal-kak-11-iskazili-syuzhet-o-saakashvili/>

<sup>8</sup> “Odin iz glavnykh bogachei Ukrainy Dmitrii Firtash arestovan po zaprosu FBR.” *RBC* (March 13, 2014). <http://top.rbc.ru/economics/13/03/2014/910931.shtml>

<sup>9</sup> “Ukraina i FBR nachali obmen informatsiei v ramkakh rassledovaniya del protiv Firtasha.” *ZN.ua* (May 13, 2015). [http://zn.ua/UKRAINE/ukraina-zaprosila-u-fbr-pomoschi-v-rassledovanii-dela-po-kompanii-ostchem-firtasha-175848\\_.html](http://zn.ua/UKRAINE/ukraina-zaprosila-u-fbr-pomoschi-v-rassledovanii-dela-po-kompanii-ostchem-firtasha-175848_.html)

<sup>10</sup> Serhiy Leshchenko, “Za lashtunkami politiki: zmovu Yatsenyuka i Akhmetova.” *Ukrainskaya Pravda Blog* (April 14, 2015).

<http://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/leschenko/552d3e78e5a3b/>

Ukrainians have become internally displaced.<sup>11</sup> The war has sent Western investors packing and triggered an unprecedented economic crisis in Ukraine.

Ukraine lost part of the Russian market; domestic chains of production have been severed; depression has deepened due to the devaluation of the Ukrainian currency. For many years, the hryvnia's exchange rate was kept artificially high: Yanukovych chose to burn through the currency reserves by avoiding the real exchange rate.

Another challenge for contemporary Ukraine that has resulted from the war is populism, which has reared its head in a time of trouble for the government. People weary of the lack of reforms easily fall prey to politicians who promise simple solutions to complex problems. Leading the charge of populism in the Ukrainian parliament is the Radical Party of Oleh Lyashko. Lyashko's antics have included stunts such as eating Ukrainian soil on the parliamentary rostrum to appeal to voters. In the 2014 elections Lyashko was able to overcome the 5 percent barrier and create his own faction. Nevertheless, while he enjoyed the support of the Firtash-Levochkin oligarchic group during the election, and weathered the constant criticism of the Kolomois'kyi clan,<sup>12</sup> his post-election situation is the exact opposite.<sup>13</sup>

The dark side of populism is the radicalization and militarization of society. Due to the hostilities in eastern Ukraine and the eagerness with which volunteer battalions take up arms in self-defense, power in the hands of the people may turn out to be a weapon which could inadvertently fall into the hands of criminals. Evidence of this threat has surfaced, including the firing of a grenade during clashes with the "Right Sector" in Zakarpattia<sup>14</sup> and a grenade explosion at Parliament during the adoption of amendments to the constitution in which four National Guard members were killed and a hundred other people injured.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "Zhertvami voyni na vostoce Ukrainy stali 6.5 tysyachi chelovek- OON." *Fakty i komentarii* (June 30, 2015). <http://fakty.ua/202068-zhertvami-voyny-na-vostoce-ukrainy-stali-6-5-tysyach-chelovek---oon>

<sup>12</sup> Yuliana Skibitskaya, "Lyashko obvinil Kolomois'kogo v nizkom rezultate svoei partii." *Vesti* (October 26, 2014). <http://vesti-ukr.com/politika/74935-ljashko-obvinil-kolomojskogo-v-nizkom-rezultate-svoej-partii>

<sup>13</sup> "Ekspert obyasnil, pochemu pomirilis' Lyashko i Kolomois'kyi." *Apostrophe* (March 31, 2015). <http://apostrophe.com.ua/news/politics/2015-03-31/ekspert-obyasnil-pochemu-pomirilis-lyashko-i-kolomoyskiy/20008>

<sup>14</sup> "Strel'ba v Mukachevo: 'Pravyi sektor' obyavil trevogu." *BBC* (July 11, 2015). [http://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2015/07/150711\\_ukraine\\_right\\_sector\\_shooting.shtml](http://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2015/07/150711_ukraine_right_sector_shooting.shtml)

<sup>15</sup> "Pogib tretiy boets, kotoriy postradal ot vcherashnego vzryva granaty pod stanami Verkhovny Rady." *TSN* (September 1, 2015). <http://ru.tsn.ua/video/video-novini/pogib-tretyy-boec-kotoryy-postradal-ot-vcherashnego-vzryva-granaty-pod-stenami-verhovnoy-rady.html>

Unable to achieve economic reforms, the populists instead focus on fighting specters from the past. For example, Lyashko submitted a law to Parliament banning Communist imagery, which extends even to decorations in the Kyiv metro built during the Soviet era.<sup>16</sup> Another of Parliament's decisions indiscriminately banned the screening of feature films made in Russia on or after January 1, 2014; the ban even included films that cast a critical eye on Russian politics.<sup>17</sup>

Speculation over these painful chapters in Ukraine's history occurs without regard for how these decisions further fragment society. Thus even liberal factions such as Poroshenko's bloc or the People's Front support populist measures. This happened with a populist law about the conversion of foreign currency loans into hryvnia at non-market rates<sup>18</sup> and with salary ceilings for MPs and ministers. When the people in power in the one of the most corrupt countries in the world earn 250 dollars per month, you can't speak of a discernable fight against corruption.

Poroshenko himself also dabbled in populism during the elections, promising to end the war in eastern Ukraine over the course of several hours, pledging higher wages for the Ukrainian army, to the tune of 100 dollars per day. Poroshenko also promised to sell his business, which is a key asset of the confectionary company Roshen, but a year after his election, he has made no progress to speak of in this matter.<sup>19</sup> Of course it would have been far more meaningful for the president to get rid of Channel 5, his private television channel, which places him among the likes of former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi (who holds the controlling stake in the Italian group Mediaset). Paradoxically, the Ukrainian president never promised to sell his media shares, which are far more important than Roshen, which at least operates in a competitive market.

### **Challenges for Ukraine's Leadership**

Petro Poroshenko, president of Ukraine, is himself a product of the oligarchic system. He became a member of the Ukrainian parliament in 1998, remained in that role until being inaugurated president in 2014, and ran several times for a position in the executive branch. This accorded him personal immunity from criminal prosecution and also gave him access to the very officials on whom the development of his business hinged. Poroshenko built his political career on the same entrepreneurial principles he applied to

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<sup>16</sup> Inna Kupriyanova, "Metro bez zvyozd: chem chrevata dekomunizatsii kievskoi podzemki." *Deutsche Welle* (May 29, 2015). <http://www.dw.com/ru/метро-без-звезд-чем-чревата-декоммунизация-киевской-подземки/a-18481800>

<sup>17</sup> Inna Kupriyanova, "Metro bez zvyozd: chem chrevata dekomunizatsii kievskoi podzemki." *Deutsche Welle* (May 29, 2015). <http://www.dw.com/ru/метро-без-звезд-чем-чревата-декоммунизация-киевской-подземки/a-18481800>

<sup>18</sup> "Ministr finansov Ukrainy raskritikovala zakon o restrukturizatsii valyutnikh kreditov." *Interfax* (July 3, 2015). <http://www.interfax.ru/business/451328>

<sup>19</sup> "V AP pojasnili, pochemu Poroshenko vsyo eshche ne prodal Roshen." *Bigmir.net* (June 15, 2015). <http://finance.bigmir.net/news/companies/57722-V-AP-pojasnili--pochemu-Poroshenko-vse-ecshe-ne-prodal-Roshen>

his business dealings. One segment of his party plays a marketing role, appearing as the public face for society, while another, which operates behind closed doors, pours money into politics in the hope that its expenditures will be duly compensated through government access.

Incumbent Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk has also surrounded himself with people corrupt to the core. His closest ally Nikolai Martynenko is under investigation in Switzerland for bribery.<sup>20</sup> Another close friend of the prime minister, Andriy Ivanchuk, is a business partner of the oligarch Kolomois'kyi, and makes no effort to hide his lobbying. Olena Tyshchenko, who was under investigation in Kazakhstan as an accomplice to the exiled local oligarch Mukhtar Ablyazov, assumed leadership of a special department for the return of stolen assets, but was fired under pressure from MPs and the media.<sup>21</sup>

The public is dissatisfied with how the new government is fighting corruption. In comparison with Yanukovych's regime, only 11 percent consider the new government more efficient in fighting corruption, while 51 percent view the situation as having deteriorated.<sup>22</sup>

This view is facilitated by regular scandals in the Ukrainian government, in which corrupt officials remain unpunished. Confidence in the government has also been undermined by the flight of one of Yanukovych's allies, Serhiy Klyuev, the official owner of the ex-president's luxurious residence, who had diplomatic immunity, but fled, hindered by no one.

As another example, the former Minister of Environment in the Yanukovych administration, Nikolai Zlochevskiy, was able to unfreeze his frozen account containing 23 million dollars in the UK. This happened after Ukraine's prosecutor knowingly announced that no criminal charges had been pressed against Zlochevskiy; although the case was brought after a few days, the lag allowed the former minister to free up his funds in the UK.<sup>23</sup>

Fighting corruption and reducing the oligarchs' level of influence on politics constitute crucial aspects of a successful Poroshenko presidency. However, firing one oligarch from a governorship or bringing criminal charges against another cannot definitively solve the

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<sup>20</sup> "Chef der ukrainischen Atombehörde soll in der Schweiz Geld verstecken." *Sonntags Zeitung* (March 22, 2015).

[http://www.sonntagszeitung.ch/read/sz\\_22\\_03\\_2015/nachrichten/Chef-der-ukrainischen-Atombehoerde-soll-in-der-Schweiz-Geld-verstecken-30868](http://www.sonntagszeitung.ch/read/sz_22_03_2015/nachrichten/Chef-der-ukrainischen-Atombehoerde-soll-in-der-Schweiz-Geld-verstecken-30868)

<sup>21</sup> "Deputat: Tyshchenko rabotala v Londone na korruptsionera." *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (July 24, 2015). <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2015/07/24/7075574/>

<sup>22</sup> Public opinion poll, carried out between July 16-30, 2015, by the sociology group Rating, on behalf of the International Republican Institute.

<sup>23</sup> "Otpiska GPU pomogla Zlochevskomu pazblokirovat' polmilliarda v Anglii" *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (February 27, 2015).

<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2015/02/27/7059960/>

problem. First of all, such a solution risks witnessing a new class of oligarchs crop up in place of the old; oligarchs newly sprung to power would surely also exploit their ties to power in order to further their own commercial interests. After Maidan, some people to watch are Ihor Kononenko, deputy head of the BPP bloc in parliament, and Boris Lozhkin, head of the president's administration, as well as Mykola Martynenko, head of the parliamentary Energy Committee, and Andriy Ivanchuk, head of the Economic Committee. Some habits of the old political guard show up in Poroshenko as well; for example, the desire to control a repressive apparatus. He considers the general prosecutor, Viktor Shokin, whose reputation has been tarnished with scandals, reliable support for his government and thus refuses to remove him from his post, despite considerable public pressure.

Curbing the influence of each individual oligarch—as happened with Kolomois'kyi—sends an important message to the public and to Ukraine's western partners. However, it is much more important to establish institutional curbs to high-level corruption, which will inevitably lead to a reduction in oligarchs' influence.

Today Ukraine, with the help of its western partners, has succeeded in passing a large package of anti-corruption legislation. A National Anticorruption Bureau was created, which, beginning in autumn 2015, is supposed to investigate corruption in the highest echelons of government. This was preceded by a transparent procedure for electing the head of the bureau, whom an independent jury selected in open competition. However, lack of political will to fight corruption is masked somewhat by the creation of the anticorruption bureau, which was the IMF's precondition for a multi-billion dollar aid package to Ukraine.

Moreover, the integration of Georgian specialists into the Ukrainian government has served to lower its tolerance towards corruption. In the office of the general prosecutor, Davit Sakvarelidze now occupies the post of deputy; he exposed several corrupt prosecutors, causing an upset within the prosecutorial system.<sup>24</sup> However, having garnered the support of the president and Ukraine's western partners, Sakvarelidze has not only strengthened his position but has become the forerunner for the post of general prosecutor in the future. In a similar vein, many Ukrainians now pin their hopes on Mikheil Saakashvili, who assumed leadership over the Odessa oblast, which is famous for rampant corruption. For many years, the land on Black Sea's coast witnessed non-transparent distribution among corrupt officials, and the commercial port in Odessa became a hotbed of bribery. In the first weeks after his appointment, Saakashvili earned fame by combating the illegal restriction of beach access for Odessa's citizens—local oligarchs had fenced off the beaches for their own recreation.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>“Sakvaredlidze: sistema soprotivlyaetsya reformam.” *BBC Ukraine* (August 13, 2015). [http://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/ukraine\\_in\\_russian/2015/08/150813\\_ru\\_s\\_sakvarelidze\\_s evruk](http://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/ukraine_in_russian/2015/08/150813_ru_s_sakvarelidze_s evruk)

<sup>25</sup> “Zabor oligarkha vokrug plyazha rozozlil Saakashvili: ‘Mne prigrasit’ Klichko?’” *Segodnya* (July 23, 2015).

While the anticorruption bureau has not begun its work, citizens' dissatisfaction with anticorruption measures can be explained. However, the creation of a new police force has already been widely appraised as an example of positive change in Ukrainian society. Young, educated, and with no ties to the old corrupt system, the Ukrainian police turned into the heroes of social networks in a matter of days. They became an indispensable example of the post-Maidan reforms for which Ukrainian society hungers. Georgian experts were to thank for this change as well: Eka Zguladze orchestrated the creation of the police force.

### **What Measures Should Be Taken**

Ukraine must abolish the institution of immunity for MPs, because this perk compels many oligarchs to fight for a seat in parliament. Precisely because of this institution, corrupt officials who had been involved in the looting of public funds, dishonest privatization, and the maintenance of Yanukovych's regime escaped punishment.

Another key measure should be the introduction of financing political parties from the federal budget. European countries from Norway to Poland operate under precisely this system. The Ukrainian parliament finally adopted this law in October 2015. This system for financing parties will diffuse oligarchs' monopolization of influence. This will be effective even if Ukraine continues to allow political contributions from individuals and corporations. As the inclusion of taxpayer money in parties' total cash pool grants rights to the public, journalists and law enforcement agencies will take a greater interest in political parties' bookkeeping.

Another anti-oligarchic measure the country ought to take is a change to election law prohibiting or restricting political parties' television ads during election campaigns. It is already perfectly clear that the main source of expenditures during political campaigns is television commercials. During the most recent parliamentary elections, one minute of ad time on one of the major TV channels—STB—cost 200,000 hryvnia, which at that time was equivalent to over 15,000 USD.<sup>26</sup>

It's clear that someone had to cover these election costs. Behind each political party hovered a pool of oligarchs and sponsors that covered the sky-high costs for candidates. As a result, this has led not only to the pumping of money into politics, but also to the "virtualization" of elections, wherein people vote guided by short and often crude messages from TV ads, without delving into the election guides, thus dispensing with ideology. But the oligarchs have benefited most from the "monetization" of politics; they learned to pay with cash from inactive parties and discounts on the high advertising rates, in return receiving quotas in party lists for their puppets.

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<http://www.segodnya.ua/regions/odessa/zabor-oligarha-vokrug-plyazha-razozlil-saakashvili-mne-priglasit-klichko-634333.html>

<sup>26</sup> "Za den'gi, vybroshenniye politikami za minutu telereklamy, mozuno obmundirovat' 24 soldat." *Prestupnosti.net* (October 6, 2014). <https://news.pn/ru/money/115596>

For deoligarchization to occur, Ukraine must adopt a law regulating transparency in media ownership that would require oligarchs to disclose their holdings. Paradoxically, Ihor Kolomois'kyi's name does not appear among the shareholders of the channel 1 +1, nor does Dmytro Firtash's among the owners of the channel Inter. Although both oligarchs name these media holdings among their assets, on paper they're represented by a kaleidoscope of offshore companies. The next step after identifying the true owners of TV companies should be to dismantle the monopoly over the TV market, which today is concentrated in the hands of four clans: Kolomois'kyi, Firtash, Akhmetov, and Pinchuk.

To encourage deoligarchization, Ukraine should establish a full-fledged public broadcasting service, independent from the government. In fact, such a service was already created for public television, and for decades it served the interests of those in power. Much remains to be done to restore trust in this TV channel, "Knopka #1," but the emergence of an independent channel with service coverage for the entire country will have a significant effect.

Public television will expose audiences to more than just honest news coverage. The appearance of such a broadcaster will influence news affiliates of channels controlled by oligarchs — over time, the oligarchs will simply lose their audience if citizens have access to alternative, unbiased news on the next TV channel. Currently, most citizens cite television as their primary source for news—around 80 percent learn about current events in the country on TV.

Introducing government funding for political parties and public broadcasting may break oligarchs' stranglehold on politics. No less important is justice reform, which currently does not live up to the challenges faced by contemporary Ukraine, post-Revolution of Dignity.

Bringing foreign specialists into Ukraine's politics has been a successful experiment; they have all proved valuable in the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice and General Prosecutor's Office. Not only are they able to implement their positive foreign experience in Ukraine, their mere presence reduces the level of internal corruption, inasmuch as they are not part of the system and aren't fettered by a decades-long history of relationships or family ties with other staff members.

It is clearly worthwhile to invite foreign specialists to other government agencies at risk for internal corruption; for example, they might join the leadership of the State Fiscal Service or the Ministry of Defense. The latter is particularly important in light of Ukraine's urgent requests for the West to provide modern weapons. For such contracts to come to fruition, senior responsibilities in the Ministry of Defense must be turned over to foreigners, who would control the agency's honesty and transparency from the inside.

Achieving change in Ukraine is possible, if there is a combination of efforts by a) civil society, b) reforms from motivated MPs and ministers, and c) Western governments. Today's Ukraine presents a unique situation, wherein the war with Russia has precluded

the opportunity for Ukraine's leadership to bargain between Europe and Moscow, receiving cheap gas or reduced loans, and postponing reforms.

Neither the president nor the prime minister is able to come to Putin any longer with a request for cheap credit, promising political unity in return. Ukraine, facing a difficult political situation, must count on help from the West. In turn, divvying out financial assistance to Kiev, international organizations should bind Ukraine to the unconditional implementation of reforms. In other words, the West shouldn't tempt the Ukrainian government with money, but should give it to them only after the adoption and implementation of concrete measures to combat corruption, improve the field for investment, and strengthen the country's defenses.

Therefore, the inclusion of anticorruption measures in the package of requirements may turn out to be the most valuable service that European and American donors can provide to Ukraine. Taxpayers in the US and EU should not have to pay for the lack of political will on the part of certain Ukrainian leaders. Only this type of solution guarantees success for Ukraine in the long run.