Ukraine Election Observation Report Verkhovna Rada Elections

March 29, 1998



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International Republican Institute Election Observation Report March 29, 1998, Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine

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Executive Summary

The International Republican Institute (IRI) deployed a 15-team delegation to observe the electoral, voting and tabulation processes in the March 29, 1998, parliamentary elections in Ukraine. The program was made possible by the National Endowment for Democracy.

The March parliamentary elections were Ukraine's first under its new constitution -- approved in June 1996 -- and preceded the presidential race scheduled in Fall 1999. Ukrainians voted in races for all 450 seats in the unicameral parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, as well as in campaigns for local mayors and deputies of village, city, raion (county) and oblast (state) councils.

Four years ago, IRI deployed teams of international observers, accredited by Ukraine's Central Election Commission (CEC), to monitor the country's parliamentary elections. IRI's March 1994 election observation report offered 21 recommendations to improve the electoral process, many of which, such as elimination of minimum voter thresholds, were reflected in the 1998 electoral code.

Numerous Ukrainian political party leaders and elected officials requested IRI's presence during the elections. These requests, as well as IRI's political party development program in Ukraine, revealed widespread concern among Ukrainian democrats that they would be unable to compete on a level "playing field" and that electoral fraud may occur, especially at the local level.

IRI's parliamentary election program examined the election in its totality, not only the actual balloting. Observers arrived in Ukraine prior to the March 29 vote and met with election and government officials, political party leaders and journalists both in Kyiv and in the regions of deployment. On election day, observers arrived at a polling station to witness its opening. Teams visited polling stations throughout the day to observe and record adherence to proper voting procedures, polling station organization, compliance of polling station workers with the election law, presence and behavior of domestic pollwatchers and the media, secrecy of voting and possible impermissible campaigning.

At the conclusion of voting, IRI delegations remained at polling stations to observe the counting and tabulation processes. IRI tracked the minutes, or record of vote totals, from these polling stations to the next level of election administration, and results were compared to the CEC's voting report. The delegation's preliminary findings were announced to the public the morning of March 30, the day after the elections.

IRI deployed delegates to 11 of Ukraine's oblasts: Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Chernivtsi, Crimea, Donetsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Odesa, Ternopil and Zhytomyr. Teams of observers and professional IRI staff members worked with local democratic coalitions to maximize the coverage and effectiveness of observation activities.

Following are abridged finding's from IRI's election observation program:

♦ IRI observers discovered no organized or premeditated attempts at electoral fraud yet witnessed limited examples of voter intimidation;

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- ♦ IRI observers witnessed numerous instances of technical violations, most of which can be attributed to political and electoral inexperience and a lack of election-related organization, attentiveness and training;
- ♦ Irregularities in the voting process were mostly caused by poor organization, crowded conditions and too few voting booths at polling stations;
- ♦ The secrecy of the vote was compromised by widespread "community voting," or more than one person entering a voting booth together, and public voting outside the booth;
- ♦ The scarcity of independent news media, the lack of media industry standards on balanced and unbiased news coverage and government intervention with media outlets hinder the ability of Ukrainians to make truly informed decisions about the political direction of their country;
- ♦ Ukraine's political parties should accept greater responsibility for the conduct of elections, specifically in terms of expanded voter education programs and improved recruitment and training for partisan pollwatchers; and
- ♦ Ukraine's CEC deserves credit for administering the elections with limited time and funding, as do voters who exceeded turnout expectations at more than 70 percent voter participation.

This report will be submitted to Ukraine's CEC, government officials and the news media in Ukraine and the U.S., Ukrainian political parties and non-governmental organizations and interested individuals and entities. It includes an assessment of the campaign and pre-election environment; an examination of the 1998 parliamentary election law and system of election administration; and recommendations for improving the balloting, tabulation and reporting processes in future elections.

IRI has a proven record of results-oriented election observation missions. Findings from IRI election observation teams have served as the basis for election law and election administration improvements in numerous countries. In Russia, for example, IRI's recommendations from the 1993 parliamentary elections provided valuable guidance to Russia's parliament and election commission in drafting a new State Duma election law. Alexander

Ivanchenko, then-vice chairman of the Russian Central Election Commission, in a March 1995 meeting on Capitol Hill, said, "The report provided by IRI's international observer delegation served as the road map for the CEC in making improvements to the election law."



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Introduction

Ukraine achieved a milestone in its democratic transition when Parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, approved the country's first post-Soviet constitution on June 28, 1996. The new constitution set in motion the process of adopting a new election law to administer parliamentary elections scheduled in March 1998. Prior to 1998, Ukrainians last voted for deputies to the Rada on March 24, 1994.

The 1994 elections were governed by an election law that from the time of its conception served as a source of division and acrimony. The law passed the Rada in November 1993 by a vote of 245 to 6 but only after very contentious debate and the refusal of many pro-reform deputies to participate in the vote.

The 1994 law called for a single-mandate, majoritarian election system of 450 seats. One of its most serious flaws was its bias against political parties in the candidate registration process. Not only did the election system contain no proportional representation of political parties similar to other European parliamentary systems, it imposed more complex nominating procedures for political parties than other nominating entities. Not surprisingly, the number of independent candidates as well as those nominated by labor collectives proliferated and left voters without clearly-defined choices on election day.

The election law also contained a strict minimum voter turn-out requirement that ruled an election valid only with the participation of at least 50 percent of the district's eligible voters. In addition, a candidate could be elected only if he or she received a majority of the votes cast.

The turn-out and vote threshold requirements undermined Ukraine's electoral process in numerous ways. First, since many elections were ruled invalid due to lack of participation, repeat elections in those districts were required. Additional elections were costly both in financial expense as well as in voters' loss of confidence in the election's legitimacy.

Second, the participation requirements did not account for those people who wanted to vote against all candidates as well as those Ukrainians who did not want to vote. And, third, the requirements caused concern that a constitutional crisis would arise if the number of deputies elected did not comprise a quorum. Although this scenario did not occur, the potential existed.

Problems in the 1994 election law resulted in a national legislature lacking a clear mandate on the course of Ukraine's future, a situation that manifested itself in Ukraine's lethargic and often painful pace of reform in the crucial early years of independence.

In September 1997, the Rada, after more than a year of debate, passed a new election code for the 1998 parliamentary campaign. President Leonid Kuchma signed the legislation on October 22 after reaching a compromise with Rada leaders on several key issues.

The election law contained a mixed system with half (250) of the Rada's seats to be elected on a single-mandate, majoritarian basis and the other half from political party lists. Restrictive voter participation requirements were removed and the position of political parties was strengthened.

It was within this context that the International Republican Institute (IRI) assembled an international observer program for the March 1998 parliamentary elections. The delegation was composed of political, regional and election experts who brought professionalism, outside expertise and objectivity to measure and support Ukraine's electoral process.

While explicit recommendations for improving future Ukrainian elections are contained elsewhere in this report, general reflection on the recent campaign and election process yields useful insight on the state of Ukraine's young democracy. First, the greatly-improved 1998 election law, while certainly not without its faults, led to much greater confidence in Ukraine's election system. One prominent example, according to political party activists, candidates and voters, is a higher level of transparency in 1998 as compared to the 1994 elections.

Second, the Ukrainian people continue to demonstrate their firm commitment toward multi-party, open elections. Election officials, for their part, were generally conscientious and serious about their responsibilities. Likewise, voters, despite pessimism caused by economic hardship and widespread government corruption, voiced their opinion at the ballot box as more than 70 percent of registered voters participated in the elections. Ukrainians' enthusiasm for transparency and a participatory system of government is encouraging, especially when considering the challenges they face and the absence of an ingrained democratic culture.

Finally, the elections send a forceful message to Ukraine's democratic political parties. Their viability depends on developing and consolidating into national, ideologically-based, grassroots organizations, instead of the regional, often personality-driven parties that many of them are today.

The March 1998 parliamentary elections represent yet another significant step forward in Ukraine's movement away from its totalitarian past. Although the road ahead is long, its democratic future continues to hold much promise.

Ivano-Frankivsk election results - 1.1 million voters

- 1. Rukh 232,559 votes (30.2%)
- 2. People's Democratic Party of Ukraine 42,931 (5.5%)
- 3. Green Party of Ukraine 34,481 (4.5%)
- 4. Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (United) 33,046 (4.3%)
- 5. Communist Party 24,924 (3.2%)
- 6. Socialist/Peasant Electoral Bloc 16,866 (2.2%)
- 7. Hromada 12,777 (1.7%)
- 28. Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine 4,789 (0.6%)

Kharkiv Oblast election results - 2.3 million registered voters:

- 1. Communist Party of Ukraine 542,943 votes (39.6%)
- 2. Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine 152,295 votes (11.1%)
- 3. People's Democratic Party 91,580 votes (6.8%)
- 4. Socialist/Peasant Electoral Bloc 90,904 votes (6.6%)
- 5. Green Party of Ukraine 83,833 votes (6.1%)
- 6. Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (United) -53,560 votes (3.9%)
- 7. Rukh 49,753 votes (3.7%)
- 8. Hromada 38,177 votes (2.8%)

Kyiv City election results - 2 million registered voters:

- 1. Communist Party of Ukraine 164,055 votes (15.8%)
- 2. Rukh 125,178 votes (12.4%)
- 3. Green Party of Ukraine 99,657 votes (9.6%)
- 4. Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (United) 97,347 votes (9.4%)
- 5. Socialist/Peasant Electoral Bloc 53,894 votes (5.2%)
- 6. Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine 51,542 votes (5.0%)
- 7. People's Democratic Party 36,955 votes (3.6%)
- 8. Hromada 34,402 votes (3.3%)

Kyiv Oblast election results - 1.4 million registered voters:

- 1. Communist Party of Ukraine 211,045 votes (22.7%)
- 2. Socialist/Peasant Electoral Bloc 165,691 votes (17.8%)
- 3. Rukh 82,103 votes (8.8%)
- 4. Green Party of Ukraine 69,040 votes (7.4%)
- 5. People's Democratic Party 57,609 votes (6.2%)
- 6. Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine 51,991 votes (5.6%)
- 7. Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (United) 40,986 votes (4.4%)
- 8. Hromada 18,769 votes (2.0%)

Odesa Oblast election results - 1.9 million registered voters:

- 1. Communist Party of Ukraine 350,744 votes (30.9%)
- 2. Green Party of Ukraine 133,523 votes (11.8%)
- 3. Socialist/Peasant Electoral Bloc 92,838 votes (8.2%)
- 4. Rukh 50,802 votes (4.5%)
- 5. People's Democratic Party 44,485 votes (3.9%)
- 6. Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (United) 43,227 votes (3.8%)
- 7. Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine 35,136 votes (3.1%)
- 8. Hromada 15,935 votes (1.4%)

Ternopil Oblast election results - 868,000 registered voters:

- 1. Rukh 207,742 votes (30.8%)
- 2. People's Democratic Party 32,725 votes (4.9%)
- 3. Green Party of Ukraine 32,357 votes (4.8%)
- 4. Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (United) 28,915 (4.3%)
- 5. Communist Party of Ukraine 21,338 votes (3.2%)
- 6. Socialist/Peasant Electoral Bloc 15,301 votes (2.3%)
 - 7. Hromada 13,018 votes (1.9%)
 - 8. Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine 3,927 votes (0.6%)

Zhytomyr Oblast election results - 1 million registered voters

- 1. Communist Party of Ukraine 198,515 votes (25.3%)
- 2. Socialist/Peasant Electoral Bloc 129,464 votes (16.5%)
- 3. Rukh 88,218 votes (11.3%)
- 4. Green Party of Ukraine 48,969 votes (6.2%)
- 5. People's Democratic Party 39,536 votes (5.0%)
- 6. Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (United) 30,730 votes (3.9%)
- 7. Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine 29,495 votes (3.8%)
- 8. Hromada 14,006 votes (1.8%)



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Recommendations

IRI's on-going assistance program to Ukrainian democrats, initiated in 1993, and its observation of the 1994 parliamentary elections combine to provide a broad-based and discernable level of understanding of Ukraine's election system, government, democratic institutions and political issues. It is with this knowledge and experience that IRI offers a comprehensive and informed analysis of the March 1998 vote, based on the work of the Institute's 15-team election delegation.

In general, IRI determined that the March 1998 parliamentary elections were absent any systematic attempts at fraud or abuse and denote a meaningful step forward in the country's progression toward institutionalized democracy. Furthermore, IRI noted that many electoral achievements were realized, despite numerous technical violations and infrastructural obstacles existing in Ukraine's young democracy. Among the most prominent of these successes:

- ♦ With great dedication and commitment, Ukraine's Central Election Commission (CEC) performed the monumental task of administering elections, a feat made notable because of implementation of a new system of elections, severe time constraints -- due to late passage of the election law -- and limited finances;
- ♦ Voter participation exceeded expectations. Election day turnout reached 70.78 percent, or 26,571,273 voters;
- ♦ Final election results, given the lack of computers and election automation equipment, were tabulated and reported to the public in a timely fashion;
- ♦ IRI observers found most polling station commissioners eagerly and attentively performing their responsibilities;
- ♦ Ethnic minorities generally voted on basis of the issues, not because of ethnicity; and
- ♦ The elections' outcome further clarifies the ideological lines among political forces, thus enabling Ukrainians to make more informed choices regarding their country's future.

As a matter of policy, IRI does not issue an indeterminate finding as to whether any election is free and fair. The Institute, through examining the election's administration and the environment under which candidates, political parties and electoral blocs competed, identifies both strengths and weaknesses in the election system. Based on this analysis, IRI offers the

following recommendations for improving future Ukrainian elections.

Election Administration

I. Polling Station Organization

The election law contained only vague guidelines for polling station organization, merely stating that polling station election commissions were responsible for voting secrecy, maintaining order and providing that voting booths and ballot boxes were visible to election commissioners and observers. Organization of many polling stations visited by IRI, not surprisingly, resembled a Soviet era pattern, which did not promote efficient voter flow and often obstructed the view of voting booth exits and ballot boxes. Likewise, numerous polling stations lacked a sufficient number of voting booths, which often caused long waiting lines, frustrated voters and an atmosphere of confusion. Consequently, faulty organization raises concerns regarding election transparency.

Recommendation:

The election law should specify polling station organization and, via training conducted by the CEC, ensure adherence by polling station officials. Organizational guidelines should include additional voting booths, provided by the CEC, to help alleviate overcrowding and long voting lines.

Illustrations should be provided showing proper organization for ballot distribution, secret voting and balloting, all within view of election officials and observers. In those cases where the limited size of voting premises do not allow an unobstructed view of ballot boxes, the election law should require that at least one polling station commissioner be stationed near ballot boxes at all times.

Attention should also be given to polling station order. Polling stations should designate at least one election commissioner to prevent overcrowding within the station's premises, direct voters into lines for ballot distribution and voting and ensure that those who have voted exit the facility.

II. Secrecy of Voting

Each polling station visited by IRI had booths or similar areas that would allow voters to mark their ballots in private. Regardless, "community voting" was rampant. Spouses, other family members and friends routinely occupied voting booths together. In most instances, election officials made no attempt to prevent it.

Equally as widespread was voting outside the voting booths, much of which was attributable to the limited number of booths relative to the number of voters. Unwilling to wait in often lengthy lines for an available booth, many voters marked their ballots in open view of others in the room.

Recommendation:

IRI hopes that the culture of democracy, one in which secrecy of the vote is cherished, will soon take root in Ukraine. IRI also recognizes that electronic voting, while not attainable in Ukraine in the near future, would partially diminish some of the factors that contribute to community and public voting. Still, IRI recommends that future elections take precautions to more closely safeguard voting secrecy. Training from the CEC should instruct local election officials on the monitoring of voting booths, allowing only one occupant per booth. More efficient polling site organization and additional voting booths, as detailed in the previous recommendation, will also help abate problems created by overcrowding and the resultant long lines at voting booths.

III. Period of Voting

The election law stated that voting would occur from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. With the large number of ballots -- some voters received as many as seven ballots, depending on the election constituency -- requiring manual counting, the tabulation process was a lengthy and tedious one. Although some election commissions completed tabulation within three to four hours of the polling station's closure, IRI observers witnessed tabulation at other polling stations that was not completed until approximately 10 a.m. the following day.

Recommendation:

Until Ukraine's election system is more fully automated, IRI recommends that the period of voting occur from 7 a.m. until no later than 8 p.m. Reduced hours would allow for more timely reporting of election results and lessen the potential for fatigue-induced mistakes.

Reducing the voting period would not adversely impact voter turnout. These elections, as in the past, were conducted during the weekend so voters were not faced with time constraints from employment. In addition, a majority of Ukrainians, based on IRI's observations, vote earlier in the day. IRI delegates found the highest voter participation in the morning and afternoon with very few voters arriving at the polls beyond early evening.

IV. Control Checks

Each ballot contained a control check that was to be signed by both the voter and the polling station election commissioner who issued the ballot. Control checks were separated from ballots and used during vote tabulation to determine the number of voters who received ballots.

IRI observers witnessed election commissioners signing multiple control checks during times when no voters were waiting for ballots. IRI also witnessed stacks of ballots with previously-signed control checks. While this may have merely been an effort by election commissioners to prepare in advance of voters' arrival, this practice raises suspicion on the validity and function of the control check.

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Recommendation:

Given the large quantity of printed ballots, IRI applauds the election law provision mandating the use of control checks. However, IRI recommends further clarification on their use, specifically mandating the signature of the polling station commissioner in the presence of the voter receiving the ballot.

V. Ballot Security

Ballots were delivered by the CEC to polling station commissions prior to the election. At most polling stations visited by IRI, the commission chairman stated that ballots had been secured until election day, usually either in a safe or in a locked room with local militia standing guard.

Concerns regarding ballot security, however, were raised on election day. Many IRI delegates saw numerous unused ballots, often a large collection of ballots stacked on the floor, left unattended and within easy access of anyone at the polling site.

Recommendation:

IRI recommends rigid guidelines to safeguard ballot security. Ballots should remain in a secured area up until the time they are needed for distribution to voters. On the day of elections, measures should be taken so that only election commission members have access to ballots. If necessary, local militia should provide additional ballot security.

VI. Ballot Boxes

Voters, depending on the electoral district, received up to seven ballots; two for the Verkhovna Rada (one each for the single-mandate and multi-mandate constituencies); one each for oblast, raion and city council; one for city, village or town mayor; and one for any local referendum. In the majority of polling sites visited by IRI observers, all ballots were placed in the same ballot box, thus prolonging vote tabulation as election commissioners had to first separate ballots for each race.

Recommendation:

IRI recommends that polling stations use a separate ballot box, one that is clearly marked to avoid confusion, for parliamentary ballots. Use of separate ballot boxes will expedite the

counting and tabulation process and help ensure the timely and accurate reporting of election results.

VII. Sample Ballots

IRI commends the CEC for the quality of voting instruction materials that were provided to each polling station. CEC-provided posters explaining voting procedures were prominently displayed at most polling sites visited by IRI observers. Voters were seen studying this information prior to voting.

Recommendation:

In addition to voting instruction posters, IRI recommends that the CEC provide sample ballots. Posters depicting actual ballots would more adequately acquaint voters with their choices and help expedite voting as voters would not require as much time within voting booths.

VIII. Election Commission Resources

Funding provided by the Verkhovna Rada for election costs was approximately 50 percent of the requirement estimated by the CEC. The resultant problems and obstacles included, but were not limited to, incomplete voter education activities; untimely delivery of ballots and other election materials to some local election commissions; CEC-sponsored training provided only for local election commission chairmen, not rank-and-file commissioners; and ballot boxes constructed of cardboard instead of more solid and secure material.

Recommendation:

IRI recognizes the revenue problems faced by Ukraine and other governments in emerging democracies. IRI, however, recommends that the Verkhovna Rada begin in 1998 to identify adequate resources for the administration of the presidential election in Fall 1999. Significant resources should be devoted toward election administration training, especially vote tabulation and reporting procedures, for polling station commissioners.

IX. Composition of Local Election Commissions

The election law mandated the inclusion of political party representatives on any local election commission where the party or electoral bloc, or one of its candidates, is registered within that particular constituency. IRI commends this provision.

However, IRI observers noted that many local election officials, those not representing political parties or electoral blocs but those appointed by local and oblast radas, held the same position prior to Ukrainian independence. Suspicions and concerns that Ukrainian elections will

be compromised in terms of impartiality and fairness will persist as long as the same officials from Soviet times continue to administer elections.

Recommendation:

IRI recommends that the CEC strongly encourage oblast and local radas, whose members appoint local election commissions, to infuse local election commissions with new, properly trained members, thus building public confidence in the election process. Training programs should ensure that all election officials depart from Soviet-era election practices.

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X. Signature Lists

Political parties and electoral blocs registering lists of candidates in the multi-mandate constituency were required to collect a minimum of 200,000 signatures of which no less than 10,000 signatures were to come each from at least 14 of Ukraine's 27 oblasts. With approximately 38 million eligible voters, the parties and blocs achieving the 4 percent voter threshold had to gain every 17th voter.

Political parties with whom IRI met expressed their concern about the practice of paying voters for their signatures, which exploits the country's economic problems and diminishes the signature list's objective. According to some political party leaders, payments started from as little as 60 kopeks (approximately 30 cents) per signature.

Recommendation:

IRI recommends that the CEC establish enhanced guidelines for collecting and verifying voter signatures. Political parties, election blocs and candidates should not be allowed to pay voters for their signatures during the registration process. In addition, the CEC should develop and enforce procedures for signature verification, such as certifying the validity of an established percentage of each signature list. There is little evidence that rigorous signature verification occurred.

XI. Appeals Process

The election law allowed political parties, electoral blocs and candidates to appeal the results of election activities at any level of election administration. Appeals could be made directly to election commissions, which were required to act within three days of the submission of the appeal or immediately if within five days of or on the day of the elections. Decisions or actions of election commissions below that of the CEC could be appealed to the next higher level of election administration. According to the CEC, it considered approximately 104 election appeals. Appeals of CEC decisions were made through the court system. However, in some post-election court rulings, which included nullification of some Rada elections by local courts,

there are allegations that the judiciary was subjected to outside pressure and influence.

Recommendation:

The powers of Ukraine's judicial system, although codified in the constitution, remain in a developmental stage. To help ensure judicial independence and objective court decisions of election appeals, additional delineation of the judiciary's powers, including enforcement mechanisms, are needed. As part of judicial clarification, IRI recommends development of specialized courts with election law jurisdiction to which CEC decisions should be appealed.

XII. Election Law Penalties

The 1998 election law contained guidelines and requirements for election administration and campaign activities. Penalties, however, for election law violations were not included.

Recommendation:

IRI recommends inclusion of specified penalties for election law violations in future election codes.

XIII. Crimean Tatars

In the late 1940s, Soviet leader Josef Stalin deported thousands of Crimean Tatars, most of whom were sent to Uzbekistan. After Ukrainian independence, many returned to their homeland but as Uzbek citizens. Uzbekistan requires a \$100 fee to renounce citizenship to that country, which is a prerequisite for regaining Ukrainian citizenship. Most Tatars are unable to afford the fee. Although discussions were held between the executive and legislative branches of government, no resolution on the voting status of approximately 65,000 Tatars was reached. Consequently, Crimean Tatars with Uzbek citizenship were not allowed to vote.

Recommendation:

Crimean Tatars forced from their homes should not be denied voting privileges because of past actions of the communist regime. The Verkhovna Rada should act to restore their citizenship and voting rights.

XIV. Residency Registration Requirement

The residency registration requirement states that Ukrainians maintain an official place of residency where they are also automatically registered to vote upon turning 18 years-of-age. A lengthy, difficult and bureaucratic process -- and thus rarely accomplished -- is required for a voter to change his/her official place of residence. As a result, the many Ukrainians who move to other villages, towns and cities may not vote in the areas in which they currently live.

Consequently, many choose not to travel to their place of official residency on election day to vote.

Recommendation:

The residency registration requirement should be amended so that Ukrainians may more easily change their official residency. The residency certification process should be relaxed. Appropriate precautions to prevent voter registration in more than one constituency should be included.

XV. Mobile Ballot Box

Voting via a mobile ballot box was allowed for voters who for health reasons were unable to travel to the polling site. The election law required ill citizens who wished to vote to submit a written request at least three days prior to the election. For those who met the application deadline, a mobile ballot box was brought to them by election commissioners on election day. Voters who fell ill within three days of the election or who, because of health problems, were unable to fulfill the required paperwork had no opportunity to vote.

Recommendation:

IRI recommends a more realistic application procedure for use of the mobile ballot box. A streamlined process with less stringent deadline requirements would allow more Ukrainians to cast ballots. Use of the mobile ballot box, however, should maintain the necessary security precautions to protect against ballot fraud.

XVI. Absentee Voting

Absentee voting was not allowed within Ukraine, with the exception of voters with ill health who qualified for use of the mobile ballot box. Voters away from their home voting districts on election day or unable to meet the criteria for the mobile ballot box were denied voting privileges.

Recommendation:

Voters unable to cast ballots at the polling station at which they are registered, such as military personnel and university students, should be allowed to vote via absentee balloting by mail. Appropriate precautions should be installed to guard against ballot fraud. The absentee voting system should include strict deadlines to avoid late receipt of absentee ballots due to Ukraine's inconsistent postal service.

XVII. Military Voting

Military personnel voted either at polling stations near military facilities or, in some cases, at polling stations on the premises of a military facility. Commanding officers typically accompanied enlisted personnel to the polling station. Although IRI observers witnessed perhaps the most orderly voting at these polling stations, there was also evidence that officers instructed or strongly encouraged enlisted personnel to vote for certain candidates or political parties and electoral blocs. IRI teams also witnessed officers directing enlisted personnel to vote at tables placed in the polling station instead of within a private voting booth.

Recommendation:

To help guard against the possibility of officers influencing the soldiers under their supervision, commanding officers should not be allowed within the polling station unless they are themselves voting or serving as an election commissioner.

Election Environment

XVIII. Independent Media

A truly informed Ukrainian electorate, one with adequate opportunity to gain objective and unbiased information on candidates, political parties and election blocs, and national and local issues, will not develop until evolution of a truly independent news media that is accessible to voters. However, media control largely remains either in the hands of government or in powerful special interests that use it to further a particular political or financial agenda. Prior to the elections, the government suspended publication of one opposition newspaper and threatened closure of other media outlets. Official government statements listed only questionable or minor offenses as justification for closure. Media freedom, as it is recognized in stable democracies, exits only in isolated instances in Ukraine.

Recommendation:

Ukrainian law should clearly define the nebulous lines that currently exist between media outlets and the controlling government, political or business entity. Accordingly, media subsidized by government entities should be guaranteed full editorial independence; the judicial system should maintain sole jurisdiction regarding closure of media outlets; and the Verkhovna Rada should approve legislative shields that will protect journalistic freedom.

Leading Ukrainian journalists, especially those from independent print and broadcast media, should also work to develop and institutionalize professional standards and responsibilities for the news media. A journalistic code of conduct, one that focuses on balanced and fair reporting in the public interest, should be the criterion by which journalists and media outlets are judged by voters.

XIX. Political Party Observers

The election provided for "official observers...from public associations of Ukraine and from candidates for deputy..." Partisan observers, who were present at almost all polling stations visited by the IRI delegation, represented political parties and candidates from across the ideological spectrum. However, they did not appear to possess detailed knowledge of the election law, information on monitoring election procedures or information on reporting election law violations.

Recommendation:

Political parties have a responsibility to ensure that their pollwatchers understand the role and responsibilities of domestic election observers. Political parties should recruit and train observers to properly monitor the election process.



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Election Administration

IRI's observation of the parliamentary elections included an examination of the election's administration. This review included such key aspects as the election law, the effectiveness of electoral institutions and guidelines for candidate and party registration.

Election Law:

When the Verkhovna Rada passed Ukraine's first post-Soviet constitution in June 1996, it firmly placed the country on course for a new round of parliamentary elections. Deputies were then challenged with developing an election law for the 1998 campaign.

In its deliberations, the Rada, to a great extent, repeated the division and acrimony that accompanied passage of the 1994 election code. The old law passed the Rada in November 1993 by a vote of 245 to 6, but only after very contentious debate and the refusal of many pro-reform deputies to participate in the vote.

Once again, debate was heated and progress on a new law was often stalled because of wide divergence not only among parliamentarians but also between the Rada and the executive branch. However, in September 1997, the Rada, after more than a year of debate, passed a 1998 election code by a vote of 230 to 73. President Leonid Kuchma signed it into law on October 22.

The new law was not without its detractors. In January 1998, the Constitutional Court began hearing arguments in a case brought by 56 Rada deputies who charged that the code's inclusion of proportionality, or use of political party list ballots (explained below), is unconstitutional. The Court ruled on February 27 against the plaintiffs and let the election law stand for the 1998 elections. However, court revisions must be made prior to the next election cycle.

Following are some of the law's key provisions:

Mixed-Election System

In 1994, all 450 Rada deputies were elected on a majoritarian basis from single-mandate constituencies. The candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast, assuming that the minimum voter participation threshold was reached, won the election. The new law contained a mixed system with half of the seats determined on a single-mandate basis and the other half taken from political party lists on a multi-mandate or proportional basis. The proportional balloting required

that parties or electoral blocs receive a 4 percent minimum to receive Rada representation. Parties and blocs passing the 4 percent barrier apportioned the 225 seats with the party or bloc receiving the most votes gaining the most seats.

First Past-The-Post

In single-mandate constituencies, the candidate receiving a plurality of the votes won the election. This was a substantial and beneficial change from the 1994 law, which not only required the participation of 50 percent of the district's voters to validate the election but also required the winning candidate to receive at least 50 percent of the votes cast. The resultant repeat elections were costly, eroded voters' confidence in the elections' integrity and ignored the right of voters to refuse participation in the election.

Candidate Registration

One of the most serious flaws in the 1994 law was its bias against political parties in the candidate registration process because it imposed more complex nominating and administrative procedures for political parties than other nominating entities. The 1998 law allowed candidate registration by self or via political parties, electoral blocs, voter groups and working collectives. (Additional information about candidate registration is contained on page 5 of this report.)

Voting Procedures

For the first time, Ukrainians experienced positive voting in the 1998 elections. Voters marked their ballots indicating whom they supported instead of negative voting employed in previous elections in which the voter marked through the names of all candidates he/she did not support. Not surprisingly, negative voting caused a large number of spoiled ballots because many voters left more than one name unmarked.

Also for the first time, Ukrainians had the opportunity to vote for "none of the above." Ballots in single-mandate elections contained the option "do not support any candidates for deputy." Likewise, an option on ballots in the multi-mandate voting read "do not support any political party or electoral bloc of parties."

Yet another new voting procedure, and the one IRI found disturbing to many local election commissioners and political party leaders, was the use of multiple ballots. Depending on the election district, voters received up to seven ballots upon entering the polling site; two for Verkhovna Rada (one for each the single-mandate constituency and the multi-mandate constituency); one each for oblast, raion and city council; one for city, village or town mayor; and one for any local referendums.

Election and campaign officials with whom IRI talked were concerned that multiple ballots would serve as a source of confusion, especially among the elderly and those voters not politically engaged. Another fear was that the bulk of multiple ballots would frustrate some voters, thus causing them to cast aside all but the first or second ballot. The use of multiple ballots also raised the possibility for either confusion or error in vote tabulation, all of which was

manually performed.

On election day, IRI delegates found only limited instances where multiple ballots caused voter confusion. The large number of ballots, however, did contribute to the long waiting lines many voters experienced at voting booths. In addition, vote counting and tabulation was prolonged as election commissioners were first required to separate ballots prior to counting.

Campaign Finance and Procedures

The election law stipulated that all political parties, electoral blocs and candidates maintain a campaign finance account at a legitimate banking institution.

There were no spending limits and no restrictions on the amount or number of campaign donations. Anonymous donations were prohibited. One week prior to the election, political parties, electoral blocs and candidates were required to submit finance reports that included donor lists to the Central Election Commission, which published the information in government newspapers two days before the election.

Campaign activities of any form were prohibited on election day. Printed campaign materials, however, could remain posted through election day provided they were not within the premises of a polling station.

Campaign materials published by political parties, electoral blocs or candidates were required to include the name of the funder, the address of the publisher and the total number of copies printed. Anonymous campaign materials were prohibited. Campaigns were required to deliver a copy of all promotional materials to the oblast election commission within three days of production.

Central Election Commission:

The Central Election Commission (CEC), which remains in existence, is an official state entity with 15 seats nominated by President Kuchma and confirmed by vote of the Verkhovna Rada. However, by the time of the March elections, it had only 13 members; one seat was not confirmed and one member, who was nominated and confirmed, refused to accept the position. The CEC's chairman is Mykhailo Riabets, a lawyer and deputy in the former parliament.

Among its primary election responsibilities, the CEC governed the operations and budgets of oblast and local election commissions; created the boundaries and determined the number of voters in each voting district; registered political parties, electoral blocs and candidates for the single- and multi-mandate constituencies; considered election-related appeals; set parameters for use of state-owned media for election coverage; and published election results.

The new CEC was established on November 17, 1997. It immediately faced the daunting

task of organizing the elections with severe constraints on time, funding and technology.

The inability of parliament and the president to reach timely agreement on the election law gave the CEC only slightly more than four months from the time of its inception to election day. With a new system of elections (single- and multi-mandate constituencies), none of the electoral districts or other structures from the 1994 parliamentary elections were valid. However, the CEC, despite the abbreviated time schedule, met election law deadlines on drawing new voting boundaries, forming local election commissions and registering political parties, electoral blocs and candidates.

Funding limitations, however, were much more problematic. The government estimated that \$237 million was needed to finance the elections, yet the CEC received only approximately \$137 million. The CEC utilized various avenues of saving money, one of which was to produce voting boxes made of cardboard instead of the more expensive and more secure plywood version preferred by election officials.

A lack of funds caused a change, widely viewed as a positive one, in the ballots. The law originally required that ballots include not only the candidate's name but also a large amount of biographical information. The ballot's length became an issue when CEC Chairman Riabets said the country lacked the capacity to print such lengthy ballots. The issue was resolved when the Rada approved new ballot specifications that shortened the required candidate information on single-mandate ballots and, on multi-mandate ballots, required only the name of the party or bloc and the first five candidates on its proportional list. (Funding for election commissions is the subject of IRI recommendation #8.)

Adding to the CEC's woes was its critical technological deficiency. A December 1997 needs assessment conducted by the International Foundation for Election Systems found the CEC with obsolete computer equipment. The CEC looked to various international donor organizations to equip the constituency commissions in 27 oblasts with computers for, among other tasks, candidate registration and transmission of election results. The compressed time schedule hindered the CEC's ability to upgrade its computer capabilities.

The Verkhovna Rada, citing concerns of fraud, in early March established an ad hoc committee to oversee the CEC. The committee's seven members were deputies who chose not to seek reelection.

Oblast and Polling Station Election Commissions:

Each oblast has a constituency election commission that was appointed by the oblast rada (elected council). Commissions have no fewer than eight members, and one representative of each political party or electoral bloc with a registered candidate in that oblast must be included in the election commission.

Polling station commissions also had no fewer than eight members who were appointed by the local rada and included political party or electoral bloc representatives with candidates registered in the polling station constituency. Each polling station had between 20 and 3,000 voters on the voting list. Some polling stations were formed at hospitals, sanatoriums and other temporary places of residence. Polling stations were open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on election day. (Please see IRI recommendation #3.)

Both the constituency and polling station election commissions suffered from the CEC's inability to provide resources for basic commission functions. In February, IRI's assessment team found local election officials who had yet to receive funding scheduled to have arrived from the CEC in January. IRI was repeatedly told that local commissions had no money to purchase essential supplies and office equipment. CEC Chairman Riabets, on February 18, reported that constituency election commissions were severely underfunded. He predicted that most constituency commissions would be unable to provide television time for candidate debates.

Training of Election Workers:

The CEC was responsible for ensuring that election commissioners were adequately prepared for their responsibilities. Training occurred in January for local election commission chairmen and secretaries. Other commissioners, especially those at the lower levels of election administration, relied solely on veteran commissioners or those officials who received CEC training for their election instruction.

Candidate Nomination and Registration:

The election law allowed candidate nomination by self or through political parties, electoral blocs, voter groups or worker collectives. Parliamentary candidates were required to be 21 years-of-age on the day of elections and have maintained Ukrainian residence for at least the past five years.

Candidates in single-mandate constituencies who were self-nominated or nominated by worker collectives or voter groups were required to collect the signatures of at least 900 voters in the respective voting district. (The election law originally specified 1,500 signatures, but the Rada reduced the number in late December 1997.) Candidates nominated by political parties or electoral blocs were exempt from this requirement. The registration deadline was February 12.

Political parties and electoral blocs registering lists of candidates in the multi-mandate constituency were required to collect a minimum of 200,000 signatures of which no less than 10,000 signatures must come each from at least 14 of Ukraine's 27 oblasts (states). The registration deadline was December 19. With approximately 38 million eligible voters, each party or bloc had to gain every 17th voter to achieve the 4 percent voter threshold to gain seats in

the Rada.

Many local political party leaders told IRI their disagreement with the legality of paying voters for their signature. IRI was told that payments started from as little as 60 kopeks (approximately 30 cents) per signature. (Please see IRI recommendation #10.) Likewise troubling to these party leaders, voters were allowed to sign the petition of more than one political party or electoral bloc.

According to the Central Election Commission, 4,231 candidates registered in single-mandate constituencies and 3,563 candidates registered on the proportional (multi-mandate) ballot. Almost 37 percent of the candidates were on both the single- and multi-mandate ballots.

In the single-mandate constituencies, 1,812 candidates were self-nominated while 2,379 were nominated by political parties or electoral blocs. The Communist Party was the only party to have nominated candidates in all 225 of the single-mandate constituencies. Parties that nominated 200 or more candidates in single-mandate constituencies were Rukh with 224 candidates, Hromada with 223 candidates, the Liberal and Labor Party bloc with 212 candidates and the Socialist/Peasant bloc with 200 candidates.

Voter Registration:

Every Ukrainian who is 18 years-of-age is automatically registered to vote. Voters are registered to vote in their official place of residency.

Left unresolved for the 1998 elections was the voter registration problem caused by past Soviet deportation of Ukrainian citizens. The most pronounced example of this situation is in Crimea where approximately 65,000 Tatars, who were deported to Uzbekistan in the late 1940s by Soviet leader Josef Stalin, have returned to Ukraine but do not have the necessary citizenship papers and are thus ineligible to vote.

The 1998 law, unlike the one in 1994, required Ukrainian citizenship for voters. However, many Tatars do not have the \$100 fee required by Uzbekistan to renounce their citizenship of that country, which is a prerequisite for regaining Ukrainian citizenship. The issue became fractious during the campaign as both the National Front electoral bloc and the large civic organization Prosvita claimed that Russian citizens living in Crimea, unlike Tatars, are registered and eligible to vote. Tatars staged numerous demonstrations in protest. (The Tatar voter registration issue is addressed in IRI recommendation #13.)

Voter Lists:

Each local government administration was responsible for compiling voter lists for the

polling stations within its jurisdiction. The list, after approval by the chairman and secretary of the respective polling station, was made available for public review at least 15 days prior to the elections. Local election commissions were required to consider citizen appeals on the list's accuracy within two days.

Process of Voting:

The election law stipulated that each polling station was to be arranged so that the entrance and exit to voting booths as well as the path to ballot boxes were in complete view of polling station commissioners and pollwatchers for political parties, electoral blocs and candidates. This arrangement was not achieved on election day at many polling stations visited by IRI delegates. (Please see IRI recommendation #1.)

IRI observers also witnessed numerous violations of election law provisions requiring voters to show proper identification and that voting be conducted in privacy. (Please see IRI recommendation #2.)

Proxy voting, or voting for other individuals, was prohibited in the election law.

Attached to each ballot was a control check that contained the name of the body being elected, the number of the election district, the polling station number and the number of voters on the voter list. The control check was separated from the ballot after it was signed by both the voter and the polling station election commissioner who issued the ballot. (The use of control checks is the subject of IRI recommendation #4.)

Absentee Voting:

Generally, absentee voting was not allowed. Exceptions were made for health reasons. Voters claiming that ill health prevented their travel to a polling station were able to submit a written request at least three days prior to the election. For those meeting this deadline, polling station commissioners traveled with a mobile ballot box to the voter to accept their vote. (IRI recommends new absentee voting guidelines in recommendation #16.)

Absentee voting was allowed for Ukrainians living abroad. According to the CEC, 110,000 Ukrainians living in other countries registered to vote at 71 Ukrainian diplomatic missions.

Absentee voting was not permissible for those who violate Ukraine's domestic residency registration requirement. The residency law, a holdover from the Soviet era, requires citizens to live in their official place of residency unless recertification, which is gained only through a difficult application process, is granted. Voters who breach this law, which is common, were

unable to participate in the elections since they are registered to vote at the polling station of their official residency, not where they currently live. (Please see IRI recommendation #14.)

Vote Counting and Reporting:

When polling station closed at 10 p.m., commission members, in the presence of observers, started the tabulation process. According to the election law, unused and spoiled ballots were to be first counted and secured followed by counting of legitimate ballots. Results were recorded on the polling station's minutes and signed by each commission member and political party representative. The minutes, ballots and control checks were then delivered by the polling station commission to the constituency election commission.

Appeals Process:

The election law allowed political parties, electoral blocs and candidates to appeal the results of election activities at any level of electoral administration. Appeals were made directly to election commissions, which were required to decide within three days of the submission of the appeal or immediately if within five days of or on the day of the elections. Decisions or actions of election commissions below that of the CEC could be appealed to the next higher level. The judicial system heard appeals of CEC decisions. (The appeals process is the subject of IRI recommendation #11.)



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Pre-Election Environment

IRI, in order to assess the atmosphere in which political parties, electoral blocs and candidates competed in the parliamentary elections, examined the pre-election campaign environment. This review included such issues as voter education, access to the media and voter participation.

Voter Education:

According to the local political party leaders and election officials with whom IRI met, perhaps the most significant shortcoming in the March elections was an incomplete voter education effort. Neither the Central Election Commission (CEC) nor national political parties possessed the capability or funding to comprehensively inform Ukrainians about the election's importance or about voting procedures. (Funding for election commissions is addressed in IRI recommendation #8.)

On the national level, the CEC was required to publicize the platform summaries of all political parties and electoral blocs. Beginning in February, the CEC started publishing election statements -- up to 7,800 characters -- in the parliamentary newspaper *Holos Ukrainy* and the government's newspaper *Uriadovyi Kurier*. Platform summaries of all 30 parties and blocs on the proportional ballot were printed prior to the election.

The CEC was also required to produce posters for each political party and electoral bloc on the proportional ballot. Five copies of each poster was to be posted at every polling station. Likewise, the CEC was required to publish 2,000 posters for each candidate running in single-mandate districts. Voting instruction posters were also distributed by the CEC to polling stations.

The greatest need for voter education was in rural regions. IRI learned that in many regions voter education was limited to publication of voting procedures and locations of polling stations in the government-controlled media, which is required by law to publicize the information.

Many representatives from independent media reported to IRI that local election commissions made no effort to contact them with voter education materials. Conversely, many of these same journalists stated they had no responsibility to proactively gather and publicize

information from the election commissions.

Voter Attitudes and Participation:

An opinion poll in March 1998 by Democratic Initiatives and the Socis/Gallup company predicted that 69 percent of voters would go to the polls on March 29. Polling data indicated that older citizens were more likely to vote than other age groups; geographically, western Ukraine would achiever higher voter participation than other regions of the country. Voters exceeded turnout expectations as 70.78 percent of eligible voters participated in the elections.

However, it should be noted that IRI was told repeatedly that voter disillusionment was widespread. "Whether I vote, don't vote or vote for no one, nothing will change," is how one local political party leader described voter attitudes. IRI's pre-election assessment team was told that poor economic conditions, questions on the integrity of the elections, doubts that the elections would produce positive change and confusion over a new election law were the most prominent causes of voter pessimism.

Ukraine's economic situation was undoubtedly foremost on the minds of voters. In recent surveys conducted by the U.S. Information Agency (December 1997 and January 1998), most voters listed economic stagnation, poverty and unemployment as the most serious problems facing the country. These attitudes, not surprisingly, have translated into serious doubts about the effectiveness of government and the value of participating in the electoral process. The USIA data also reveals that 79 percent of Ukrainians lack confidence in the parliament and that only one-third of Ukrainians agree with the statement that "voting gives persons like me some say" in how the government runs the country. In the Democratic Initiatives/Socis Gallup poll, only 23 percent of respondents stated that the coming elections would produce positive change.

A major factor eroding voters' confidence in government is the inability of the executive branch to provide pensions to the elderly or pay timely wages to workers. The government's backlog of wages and pensions now totals 5.2 billion hryvnas (\$2.65 billion).

Since independence, Ukrainians also have been hit hard by inflation. The Government's Statistical Committee reported that inflation in 1997 fell to 10 percent, a sharp decrease from the days of hyperinflation in the early post-Soviet years. Still, Ukrainians find it difficult to survive without resorting to the shadow economy. Prime Minister Valerii Pustovoitenko in February predicted 1998 inflation at 17.8 percent.

Unfortunately, Ukraine's economic forecast gave voters little reason for optimism. In January, the International Center for Policy Studies in Kyiv released a study that foresees a 1.5 percent decrease in the country's gross domestic product in 1998. According to the center's economists, the 1.5 percent fall in production is optimistic.

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In addition, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) ranks Ukraine near the bottom in economic performance among former Soviet states. Out of 25 ex-Soviet republics, Ukraine is 23rd in 1997 economic performance, according to the EBRD.

Media Access and Coverage:

Similar to other post-Soviet states, Ukraine's media suffer from the legacy of strict communist control on the free flow of information. In brief, even after almost seven years as a sovereign country, there is no independent media comparable to that in the West that play the role of government watchdog. State-owned or subsidized media still dominate the market, and, although private media outlets do exist, most cannot be termed truly independent because they serve as mouthpieces for financial backers, usually either regional economic or political interests.

Although Ukrainian media are generally free of outright censorship, which is forbidden by law, rigid media control is routinely exercised and conflict of interest as it relates to editorial content is the norm rather than the exception. Such is certainly the case in most of Ukraine's oblasts where the most widely circulated newspaper is typically the official publication of the oblast government administration.

Likewise, media ownership has primarily fallen into the hands of economic and political interests who use media outlets for their own financial or political gain. This close relationship between media and power elites was characterized by Sergei Sobolev, leader of the Reforms parliamentary group in the former parliament, who said in *The Ukrainian* that "the rich and powerful continue to regard the media as their domain, determined to make it act at their beck and call."

Given this scenario, confrontations among media-controlling political interests, including government entities, were not surprising during the election season. One prominent example was the opposition newspaper *Pravda Ukrainy*, which was suspended by the Information Ministry over alleged irregularities in the way it is registered with the government. Information Minister Zinoviy Kulyk ordered a state-run printer to halt the newspaper's publication, a move interpreted by many as unlawful. The Verkhovna Rada, on February 3, approved a resolution urging the government to retract the print ban and dismiss Kulyk.

Government officials stated that the closing of *Pravda Ukrainy* was not politically motivated. However, many political leaders believed that the paper was a thorn in the side of President Kuchma. The newspaper was openly supportive of former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko and his Hromada party and often very critical of the government. Lazarenko, who Kuchma fired in 1997, is a likely presidential candidate in 1999.

The election law required all state media to provide equal coverage of political parties, electoral blocs and candidates and to publish information from local election commissions. In

some instances, state media provided this information as well as large amounts of additional election-related coverage. In other instances, state media, specifically newspapers, provided little to no coverage.

Many political party leaders told IRI that the equal coverage provision existed only in law, not in reality. For example, a political party official in Donetsk stated that his party was refused coverage in the state newspaper, a situation he blames on the oblast government.

Private media typically cover only those political parties and candidates favored by the editors and owners; those parties or candidates not supported by media management are sometimes refused the opportunity to even purchase advertising. One journalist from an independent newspaper told IRI that he provided political coverage for only those parties and candidates who support economic reform and Ukrainian independence. Others, he said, received no news coverage but were allowed to purchase advertising, although editorial comments from the staff accompanied the advertisement. The general manager of one television station told IRI observers that the station selected one candidate for favorable coverage in the final days of the campaign after the candidate made a financial contribution to the station.

One of the few credible, independent voices on election coverage was *Elections-98*, a press center established in September 1997 to be a "neutral informational territory." *Elections-98* sought to provide impartial information on candidates and their platforms, expose violations of campaign laws and principles and protect voting freedom. Unfortunately, the *Elections-98 Bulletin* was available only in metropolitan areas, leaving rural voters with no access to balanced election coverage.

(Media issues are the subject of IRI recommendation #18.)

Security Issues:

Security was of little or no concern in the central, northern and western parts of the country. The situation, however, was much more sensitive in southern and eastern Ukraine where isolated incidents of violence occurred prior to the elections.

The most pronounced security concerns were in Crimea. Two acts of violence early in the year illustrated the tensions on Ukraine's peninsula. The first occurred on February 6 when Oleksandr Safontsev, the Vice Premier of the Crimean Council of Ministers and a parliamentary candidate, was the victim of a bomb attack in Simferopol. Local media reported that Yalta City Councilman and alleged mafia boss Serhiy Voronkov, who is believed to have fled to Greece, was responsible for the attack. Safontsev died on February 23.

Second, two Crimean Tatar activists were killed in early February. No suspects or motives were found.

While there was no violence in Crimea on election day, Crimean Tatars who were denied voting rights staged massive protests the day before elections. (Please see IRI recommendation #13 for more information on this issue.)

In the southern port city of Odesa, Mayor Eduard Hurvits said during a news conference in March 1998 that an August 1997 murder of a journalist and a February 1998 assassination attempt on another journalist were aimed at ridding Odesa of its mayor. On February 27, another Hurvits ally, the chairman of a city district council, was kidnapped and is feared dead.

A bomb threat at an Odesa polling station was issued a few days prior to the elections. However, no violence or civil strife was reported in Odesa on election day.

In eastern Ukraine, the industrial and mining region of Donetsk was also subjected to violence widely believed to be politically-motivated. Viktor Sheludko, mayor of Shaktarsk in Donetsk oblast, was shot and killed on February 11. Sheludko, a communist incumbent, was seeking reelection. Also in Donetsk, Yevhen Scherban, a Rada deputy and member of the Liberal Party of Ukraine, and his wife were gunned down in 1996 on the airport tarmac after arriving from Moscow.

According to some of the political party leaders, candidates and journalists with whom IRI met, verbal threats and non-violent forms of intimidation occur on a more frequent basis than physical violence.



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Cherkasy Oblast Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998

I. Summary

Observation delegate David Kramer and IRI staffer Patricia Stolnacker traveled to Cherkasy oblast to observe the March 29, 1998, Verkhovna Rada elections. On March 29, residents voted on six separate ballots: multi- and single-mandate Verkhovna Rada constituencies; mayor; and oblast, raion and local councils.

The IRI team arrived in Cherkasy two days prior to the elections and met with political party representatives and election officials to assess pre-election activity. IRI found that each of these representatives believed they lacked adequate resources for the election. The high cost of administering the election as well as advertising in the media made it difficult for the representatives to accomplish their tasks.

On election day, IRI observed balloting at 12 polling stations. The schedule took the observers to both rural and city sites and included a visit to both a prison and a military base. No intentional attempts at voting fraud or election law violations were observed; administration of the voting process as well as the tabulation and calculation of results was accomplished with only unintentional irregularities.

II. Regional Summary

Cherkasy oblast occupies 20.9 thousand square kilometers in central Ukraine. Its origins date to the 15th century. However, it grew in prominence in the late 19th century as the crossing point over the Dnipro River for the railway between Moscow and the Black Sea port city of Odesa. Cherkasy is bordered by the Kyiv oblast to the north, the Poltava oblast to the east, the Kirovograd oblast to the south and the Vinnytsia oblast to the west. Cherkasy city is the oblast's capital.

Cherkasy's economy is characterized as industrial-agricultural. The region's natural resources consist mainly of brown coal, peat, granite, kaolin, sands and clays. Due to favorable climatic conditions, the region is also rich in vegetation. Nearly 341 hectares of land are covered by forests. More than 300 enterprises have been built in this region to utilize these raw materials.

Most are chemical and food industries, but there are also machine building, metal-working, power and light industries.

The oblast should be considered a typical Ukrainian region in terms of economics and politics. Agriculture, a sizable portion of the oblast's economy, has experienced the same problems as other farming areas in the country: sagging demand, faltering infrastructure and poor quality control. Its chemical and light industrial base has suffered decreased production in the years after the Soviet Union's collapse, resulting in both unemployment and delays in payment of salaries. As a result, economic issues are among the leading concerns of Cherkasy voters.

Politically, there is a mix of left-, center- and right-oriented ideology of voters and political parties. The Agrarian Party of Ukraine is very strong in membership as are the Communist Party of Ukraine, Rukh, the Socialist/Peasant electoral bloc, the All-Ukrainian Labor Party, the Labor/Liberal Together electoral bloc and the Bloc of Democratic Parties.

II. Regional briefings

The Cherkasy team arrived prior to election day and met with representatives from the constituency election commission to discuss preparations for the election. IRI also met with local party leaders and gained valuable political input as well as insight on the concerns facing political parties in the region.

IRI's team met with the chairman of one of the two election districts in the Cherkasy region. He stated that the constituency's greatest obstacle in preparing and administering the elections was a lack of resources. According to the chairman, the district received only 45 percent of the resources it needed to adequately conduct the election. The chairman was satisfied by the information conveyed by the oblast election commission and the Central Election Commission (CEC) in Kyiv. Last minute changes to the ballots were corrected in a timely manner, and there was a clear line of communication among the election officials.

IRI representatives found in their meeting with the Liberal Party of Ukraine (LPU) that its members seemed disillusioned with the campaign process and pessimistic of the outcome of the elections. LPU leaders expressed a deep dissatisfaction with the election law, voting districts and the CEC's handling of their appeals. They also bemoaned the cost of running for office and the amount of coverage provided in local media as mandated by the election law. When asked if there were opportunities to purchase more advertising space, they replied that there were but that they did not have the resources to do so. The LPU was also experiencing a split with the national party headquarters and mentioned that they were not campaigning or promoting the national candidates.

The Rukh Party seemed very organized in its preparation for election day. Its activists

visited approximately one-third of the Cherkasy region in door-to-door campaigning. Despite these accomplishments, the chairman complained that late passage of the election law did not allow enough time to properly educate voters. Also, Rukh leaders believed that the time allotted to their candidates in local media was not sufficient.

Rukh officials were deeply concerned about the possibility of fraud in the rural areas and asked IRI to travel to certain polling stations where they anticipated problems. Representatives from Rukh spoke to CEC officials about their concerns but were not confident that the CEC would act on their appeals.

III. Election day

The IRI team arrived at a polling station in a village outside of Cherkasy city and observed commissioners open balloting promptly at 7 a.m. All members of the election commission were present. The ballot box was sealed properly and was in plain view of election officials and pollwatchers. While military personnel were present, they simply observed the voting process and did not attempt to interfere in any way. Three domestic observers were also present for the opening and did not report any irregularities to IRI.

The commissioners seemed well informed of the election law and stated they had received adequate information from the CEC. Half of the commissioners were new, the rest had previously participated in election administration. The commissioners said they received ballots on time and properly secured them prior to election day.

IRI proceeded throughout the day to 11 additional polling stations in both rural areas and in the city of Cherkasy. The team also observed balloting at a prison and military base. Overall, the conduct of the elections at the polling site level appeared to be well organized. There were, especially during mid-day, crowded polling stations with long voting lines.

In the majority of polling sites, the IRI team found that CEC election literature had been received and were properly displayed. However, IRI noted that the military base they visited did not post any CEC election materials. When asked if the base received the materials from the CEC, the commanding officer stated that it had. They posted the information in the barracks for the men but would not allow IRI to go there and view it.

IRI found additional irregularities at the military base. The team witnessed no one at the station voting inside the voting booth. Instead, voters used large tables in the room. When asked why no one was using any of the four voting booths, the commanding officer said the soldiers could use it if they were afraid or had something to hide. He stated that only 48 men had used a voting booth that morning but that no one was keeping an official count.

The IRI team had the opportunity to spend several minutes alone with two young soldiers

and asked their opinion on the fairness of the election. When asked if there had been any attempt at voter coercion, the two soldiers stated that their unit had been told how to vote prior to election day. The men said they deliberately invalidated their ballots but that most of the other men followed the instructions of their commanding officer and voted for the candidate as ordered.

Overall, there were many instances of voter confusion, particularly in rural areas. People seemed to spend much of their time asking each other questions on how to vote rather than address any questions to the election commissioners.

The election commissioners did do a thorough job of checking voter identification and would not allow people without proper identification to vote. However, IRI observed one instance where an election official in the village of Bilozikje did allow someone to cast their vote without identification. He stated that he knew the person so he allowed the person to cast his vote. When other domestic observers were questioned, no other accounts were mentioned. They observed several people turned away from the polls by commissioners because they did not have identification documents.

The violations witnessed in Cherkasy were, for the most part, administrative oversights and misinterpretations of law, rather than blatant manipulations. Voting irregularities occurred in the form of voting outside the voting booth, more than one person in a voting booth, people other than election commissioners being designated to answer voter questions and conversation and discussion between voters while completing their ballots.

The IRI team decided to return to a polling station they had visited earlier in the day to observe closing of the polls and vote tabulation. IRI chose to visit this particular station due to a lack of understanding of the election law they witnessed during the day. When the team observed voting early in the day, there was a misunderstanding over the placement of the ballot box. Election commissioners believed that they should not have anyone near the ballot box and it was placed in a room with no observers rather than in an open area where any vote tampering would be observed. However, IRI noted that at the end of the day, ballot boxes were still properly sealed and no irregularities were noted by domestic observers.

Commissioners at this site were extremely organized in closing the polling station, vote counting and tabulation of results. Despite an electricity failure at the start of the counting process, each commissioner was organized in his/her responsibilities. Electricity was restored halfway through the count. Each candidate and party list ballot was divided into piles after the election chairman read their names. The pile was then counted and recounted. Commissioners stated the results to the chairman.

As of 3:30 a.m. on March 30, the commission had tallied the majoritarian and proportional ballot votes. The chairman then permitted IRI to make a copy of the minutes, which the chairman signed. There was some confusion because the election commission chairman did not seem to understand the exact procedure for transporting the ballots to the constituency

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election commission office. The polling station commission was informed at 3:45 a.m. by the constituency commission that they could not transport the ballots until the other two polling stations in the village (there were three in the village) also finished counting their ballots and delivered them as well. Due to the electricity failure, the other two stations did not start counting their votes until very late, choosing not to count by candlelight as this polling station had done. The commissioners then proceeded to secure the ballots, using maps of the former Soviet Union as their wrapping paper.

V. Post Election

At 6 a.m. on March 30, the other two polling stations were still not finished counting, and the election commissioners were told they needed to vacate the room in order to make copies of the official results. At this time, three commissioners left, escorted by militia officers, to go to another building to make copies, still not having received word that they could deliver the ballots due to the other two polling stations that were still not finished. The final results were delivered at 12 noon on March 30 to the constituency commission.



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Cherkasy Oblast Exit Poll Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998 International Republican Institute

(Cherkasy - 18 Respondents: Results are unofficial, based only on the responses of interested voters after departing polling stations. Responses were gathered in a non-scientific method and are not intended to be statistically valid.)

1) The voting instructions were:

Easy to understand	22.2%
Somewhat complicated	66.6%
Very difficult to understand	11.1%

2) What source did you rely on most for political information for the election? (Pick one)

Television	66.6%
Radio	16.3%
Newspaper	5.5%
Posters, other literature	0%
Meeting the candidates	5.5%
Party/election bloc label	0%
Friend/relative or spouse	5.5%

3) Thinking about all the pre-election information you had, did you find that you:

Had more than enough information to make an informed decision 22.2%

Had about the right amount of information to make an informed decision

Had not enough information to make an informed decision 5.5%

4) What qualities were most important in the candidates and parties you supported?

72.2%

Someone I trust 11.1%

I agree with the policies advocated by the candidate/political party 88.8%

One who will work hard to make life better for people 0%

5) What do you think the top priority of the new Rada ought to be?

Political stability 5.5%
Economic reform 77.7%

Stopping corruption in government 27.7%

Reducing crime 11.1%

Ukrainian sovereignty 22.2%

Other 0%

6. Which best describes the impact of your vote?

My vote is important to Ukrainian

democracy 16.6%

Voting helps determine Ukraine's future 33.3%

Elections are already determined by those in power	5.5%	
•		
Nothing will change	38.8%	
7) What is your opinion about the mixed	l-election system?	
It will ensure that majority views are represented in the Rada	16.6%	
Should have only a proportional system	16.6%	
Should have only single-mandate system	5.5%	
It makes no difference	5.5%	
Don't understand the system	55.5%	
8) Who would you like to see elected pre	sident in 1999?	
President Leonid Kuchma	11.1%	
Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz	: 0%	
National Security Advisor Volodymyr Horbulin	0%	
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	11.1%	
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	16.6%	
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	0%	
Other	61.1%	
9) Who is responsible for Ukraine's problems today? (Pick one)		
President Leonid Kuchma	83.3%	
Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz	11.1%	
National Security Advisor	0%	

Volodymyr Horbulin

Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	0%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	5.5%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	0%
Other	0%

10) Sex

Male	77.2%
Female	22.2%

11) Member of a political party?

Yes	16.6%
No	83.3%



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Chernihiv Oblast Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998

I. Summary

Balazs Jarabik, observation delegate from Slovakia, and Ellen Yount from the IRI staff traveled to 13 polling places in districts #206, #207 and #208 in Chernihiv oblast during the election observation mission. The deployment team found chaotic polling conditions that were caused by a low number of polling booths; multiple ballots (6); unfamiliarity with the new election law; unfamiliarity with election observers; and the generally cramped conditions at polling sites.

In general, IRI was graciously accepted by election official, the only exception being one polling place where an unauthorized city official refused to let the team meet privately with the election chairman. The observation schedule took the team to a military school, a prison and a number of small, rural polling stations. Most of the rural stations had an air of festivity about them with music blaring from large speakers placed outside and numerous voters lingering about after they had cast their votes. Many officials and voters were surprised by IRI's presence and were completely unfamiliar with the supplemental election code governing the team's observation activities.

These findings are based on IRI's observations from polling station visits, as well as meetings with political party officials and journalists on Saturday, March 28, and post-election visits to the #206 and #207 constituency election commissions.

II. Regional profile

Chernihiv oblast is Ukraine's second largest administrative territory, covering 32 thousand square kilometers. It is located in the northern forest/steppe zone of Ukraine and is bordered by Belarus to the north, Russia to the northeast, Sumy oblast to the East, Poltava oblast to the south and Kyiv oblast to the southwest. Administratively, the oblast is further broken down into 22 districts, 15 towns, 31 townships and 1,508 rural settlements.

Agriculture plays a vital role in the region's economy. In addition to the 623 collective

and state farms, Chernihiv also has approximately 575 individual farms in the region covering roughly 18 thousand hectares of land. The government has allotted nearly 11.5 thousand hectares of land for collective gardening and market gardening and 190 hectares of land for private gardening and building. Chernihiv's agriculture specializes in different grains, potatoes, flax, sugar beets, vegetable and fodder cultures.

The industrial complex of the region consists of 278 enterprises representing the textile, fuel, machine-building, metal-working, food and light industries. Of these enterprises, 211 of them are now privatized. Chernihiv's textile industry produces roughly 55 percent of Ukraine's wool fabric and 30 percent of its synthetic fibers and threads. Oil constitutes the most developed resource in the fuel industry.

More so than in other regions of Ukraine, environmental issues rank high in priority among Chernihiv voters. Area residents state concern about environmental degradation, much of it resulting from memories of the 1986 Chornobyl nuclear disaster.

The Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU), as in many of the country's oblasts, is perhaps the region's best organized political party. The Chernihiv CPU is partially supported by the Communist Party of Russia, which lends the CPU chapter support in the form of information exchanges and technical assistance.

Among pro-reform parties, the Liberal Party of Ukraine (part of the Labor/Liberal electoral bloc) is perhaps the most prominent with grassroots organization scattered throughout the oblast. Other reform-oriented parties with significant membership in Chernihiv include Rukh, the Green Party of Ukraine, the People's Democratic Party of Ukraine and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, which belongs to the National Front electoral bloc.

III. Regional briefings

Immediately upon arriving on Friday, March 27, and on Saturday, March 28, IRI's deployment team met with the following individuals: 1) Fred Bradley, Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU); 2) "We" bloc mayoral candidate; 3) vice-chairman of the Rukh party; 4) vice-chairman of the Liberal Party; 5) chairman and electoral commission members, #207 voting district; and 5) the editor-in-chief of an "independent" newspaper, Chernihiv Mid-Day.

The Committee of Voters of Ukraine trained 180 election monitors and registered 677 monitors to cover polling stations in the #206 - #211 voting districts. The small, cramped headquarters was a hub of activity during the team's visit, and IRI was able to coordinate election observation with CVU to ensure maximum coverage. The CVU, however, did state a number of difficulties, particularly the intimidation of people who wanted to participate in training, as well as difficulty in securing sites to conduct the training.

On Friday evening, IRI's deployment team met for two hours with the "We" bloc mayoral candidate and his campaign staff. He alleged that a rock had been thrown through his front window earlier in the week, and he was facing intimidation from local officials who blocked his access to local factories. In addition, he said that the incumbent mayor had been allowed to campaign at these locations and had also been given greater access to local media, including the unfair advantage of a 30-minute program.

Although invitations were extended to all the local political parties, the team was only able to meet with two of them due to the proximity to Sunday's elections. The Communist Party and Social Democrats declined IRI's invitation. The political parties with which IRI met both echoed comparable sentiments, namely that they were hampered by financial constraints and felt unfairly disadvantaged in the current media environment. However, Rukh appeared to be quite actively engaged in a local campaign with door-to-door activities, posters, concerts and other grassroots methods.

In contrast, the Liberal Party office was virtually absent campaign-type activities during the IRI teams's visit. The vice-chairman of the party claimed that fundraising was the party's most difficult challenge. Although the party had published a newspaper, two months before the elections the paper was stopped due to financial constraints. To compound matters, the official claimed that certain newspapers were told not to take the advertisements of their party.

IRI met with the editor-in-chief of "Chernihiv Mid-Day," a 3-year-old "independent" publication. The newspaper is a private weekly that is printed in Russian, sold mostly in kiosks and is read, according to the newspaper, by about 5 percent of the local population. The editor indicated to IRI that not all parties and candidates had received coverage in the media. Only the "We" bloc could afford advertisement costs.

Finally, the team met with officials from the #207 constituency election commission. The chairman had been in his position for three months and was the head of the local employment office, a government-appointed position. The other members had all served previously as election officials. Repeatedly, he said he did not anticipate any problems on election day and felt confident that voters had received adequate information about voting. He defended the new law to such an extent that he would not even acknowledge that voters might be confused with the multiple ballots. Although the officials freely answered IRI's questions and spent considerable time with the team, they did not acknowledge the most basic problems that could arise given new voting procedures and the lack of local resources.

On the eve of the elections, IRI visited three polling sites between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. to verify the security of ballots. Conditions at all three polling sites -- a hospital, apartment building and government building -- were virtually the same. One militia officer was guarding the locked ballots and indicated that no one else had been present in the evening. Conditions at all sites were observed as normal.

IV. Election Day

IRI's team arrived to observe the opening of a polling site at 6:30 a.m. The team observed the sealing of the ballot boxes and the opening of the polling site promptly at 7 a.m. Domestic observers were present. Polling booths were not easily visible to polling station officials or domestic observers. The polling station chairman indicated that not all election commission members had been present when the ballots were initially received and counted. Candidate materials and voting instructions were properly posted and good security existed at this location.

Throughout the day, a number of irregularities were observed, the most blatant of these occurring in Lemeshy where numerous voters were entering the booth together and at least two individuals were observed just outside the booths whispering to voters the name of a local candidate. In addition, a local elected official who was not properly authorized to be present refused to allow the IRI team to meet privately with the polling station chairman and appeared to attempt to intimidate IRI with her presence.

Aside from this incident, chairmen of local polling sites were pleased and willing to meet with IRI. They gave IRI's team answers to the questions asked, although their familiarity with the new election law was not reassuring. Many of them indicated that they had participated in numerous election law trainings and received booklets from the CEC, although there was confusion in one particular area -- the posting of officially-recognized posters.

Many polling stations did not post the candidate information that was provided by the CEC. Several chairmen indicated that they believed the law did not allow such information to be present on election day. In addition, there was lax enforcement of the procedure for voters to receive ballots with many rural polling station chairmen indicating that a passport was not required since they personally knew most voters. Clearly, all the stations suffered from an inadequate number of voting booths and cramped conditions that often resulted in waiting lines, further causing community voting attempts.

Voters appeared to be confused, not only by the number of candidates, but also by the large number of ballots. Older voters seemed particularly confused and many polling station officials had to explain the procedures for voting. Interviews with voters revealed that they felt ill-informed and perplexed by the large number of candidates whose positions were not communicated to them.

At a polling station in Chernihiv city, the site of the local prison facility, IRI was able to observe a number of detainees voting. Conditions were far from ideal with a very small room serving as the voting area. Detainees entered in groups of two under the close supervision of a prison official. IRI's attempts to talk with detainees were largely unsuccessful, since the three who were chosen to talk with the team were not allowed to speak freely. Instead, seven prison officials stood nearby listening to the conversation. However, these three detainees did indicate

that this was not their first time voting, although it was clear that they were very nervous about answering questions in front of the detention facility guards.

Conditions at the military school were also somewhat unique, as the polling station chairman would not allow the team to roam freely to observe the ballot boxes or election official roles. At one point, he became very angry and insisted that Article 136 of the election law precluded Mr. Jarabik from walking throughout the polling site unaccompanied. As a result, IRI was unable to speak with any voters at this particular site. Finally, IRI's attempts to talk with domestic election observers were futile, as the chairman remained at the team's side. It was clear that their presence was largely ornamental since they were a great distance from the voting booths and ballot boxes, and many of them seemed rather disinterested in the process of voting.

In all of the polling sites the IRI team visited, with the exception of two, party and non-partisan election monitors were present. At almost every polling site, Communist Party monitors were present, as well as those from Rukh and Hromada. However, IRI's conversations with them revealed most domestic observers to be unfamiliar with the election law. Moreover, many of them sat passively watching the voting and did not appear to be engaged in the process. At the final site where the team observed vote counting and tabulation, domestic observers remained in their chairs throughout the process and never examined a ballot or talked with any of the officials, except at one point later in the evening.

IRI was in contact with the CVU earlier in the day and was informed that problems existed at one polling station. Upon arriving at 9:20 p.m., the team was met by the polling station chairman, who answered IRI's questions and did not indicate that any complaints had been voiced. However, the domestic observers from Hromada and the Agrarian Party had written numerous election irregularities in a series of reports, namely that ballots were completed outside of polling booths and that people were told for whom to vote. Also, according to the domestic observers, tables were placed in front of polling booths in an attempt to influence voters as they were entering the booths. At 9:50 p.m., CVU Director Fred Bradley arrived at the site and finished interviewing the domestic observers.

The team's final polling station of the day was located at the city telephone company, which had a large picture of Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin covered by a large red curtain on the left side of the room. Most of the election officials were employees of the company. The polling station closed at 10 p.m. and the tedious process of hand-counting the ballots proceeded immediately. Ballots from the mobile box were mixed with the other ballots, and the counting of the Rada ballots continued until 2 a.m. Domestic observers from the Communist Party, Agrarian Party, Social Democrats and Rukh were present. Unfortunately, the observers did not appear to have complete knowledge of the election law and remained immobile throughout the evening. One of the election officials was unfamiliar with IRI's right to be present for vote tabulation as international observers.

Close inspection of the ballots also illustrated that many ballots had been invalidated

because they contained more than one mark, even though the intention of the voters was easily discernible.

IRI remained throughout the vote tabulation and accompanied the election commissioners as they delivered the sealed ballots to the constituency election commission. Vote totals matched those totals that were delivered to the constituency election board. These totals were again verified on Monday afternoon at the #207 constituency board.

V. Post Election

Late Monday morning and throughout the afternoon, repeated visits were made to the #206 and #207 constituency election commissions to obtain final vote tallies. As of 3 p.m., neither board had received 100 percent of the totals, and the #207 board had even failed to post the minutes from the polling stations that they had received.



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Chernihiv Oblast Exit Poll Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998 International Republican Institute

(Chernihiv - 35 Respondents: Results are unofficial, based only on the responses of interested voters after departing polling stations. Responses were gathered in a non-scientific method and are not intended to be statistically valid.)

1) The voting instructions were:

Easy to understand	60.0%
Somewhat complicated	25.7%
Very difficult to understand	14.2%

2) What source did you rely on most for political information for the election? (Pick one)

Television	45.7%
Radio	2.8%
Newspaper	20.0%
Posters, other literature	5.7%
Meeting the candidates	17.1%
Party/election bloc label	0%
Friend/relative or spouse	8.5%

3) Thinking about all the pre-election information you had, did you find that you:

Had more than enough information to make an informed decision 20.0%

Had about the right amount of information to make an informed decision 45

45.7%

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Had not enough information to make an informed decision

31.4%

4) What qualities were most important in the candidates and parties you supported?

Someone I trust 20.0%

I agree with the policies advocated by

the candidate/political party 22.8%

One who will work hard to make

life better for people 51.4%

5) What do you think the top priority of the new Rada ought to be?

Political stability 31.4%

Economic reform 25.7%

Stopping corruption in government 51.4%

Reducing crime 48.5%

Ukrainian sovereignty 31.4%

Other 2.8%

6) Which best describes the impact of your vote?

My vote is important to Ukrainian

democracy 17.1%

Voting helps determine Ukraine's future 48.5%

Elections are already determined by	
those in power	22.8%
Nothing will change	28.5%
7) What is your opinion about the mixed	d-election
It will ensure that majority views	

n system?

are represented in the Rada	42.8%
Should have only a proportional system	8.5%
Should have only single-mandate system	17.1%
It makes no difference	17.1%
Don't understand the system	11.4%

8) Who would you like to see elected president in 1999?

President Leonid Kuchma	11.4%
Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz	25.7%
National Security Advisor Volodymyr Horbulin	5.7%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	17.1%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	0%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	5.7%
Other	28.5%

9) Who is responsible for Ukraine's problems today? (Pick one)

President Leonid Kuchma 51.4%

Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 2.8%

National Security Advisor

Volodymyr Horbulin	0%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	2.8%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	0%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	5.7%
Other	5.7%
10) Sex	
Male	54.2%
Female	17.1%
11) Member of a political party?	
Yes	5.7%
No	65.7%

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Chernivtsi Oblast Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998

I. Summary

Marek Kapusta, delegation observer from Slovakia, and IRI staff member Kent Patton traveled to Chernivtsi oblast to observe the Verkhovna Rada elections. The deployment team arrived the day before elections and conducted meetings with political party leaders, local media representatives, election commissioners and oblast Rada administrators. On election day, the team observed balloting at 15 polling stations.

Overall, the elections in Chernivtsi oblast, while chaotic, were marked by a seemingly genuine desire on the part of election commissioners to conduct fair elections. The Chernivtsi observation team found no examples of intentional fraud in the polling stations visited. However, a number of issues contributed to irregularities and inefficient election administration.

First, in most polling stations visited by IRI, overcrowding was a significant problem. Despite having more people in the polling site than could reasonably fit, election commissioners took no action to control or direct the flow of voters, lending increased confusion to the voting atmosphere.

Partially as a result of overcrowding, community voting was likewise widespread. Community voting was a problem at most sites in Chernivtsi. Due to long lines at voting booths, voters were less willing to wait and thus voted outside the booths.

In addition, the IRI team found many polling stations to be poorly configured so that election commissioners and observers did not have a clear view of ballot boxes. Most voting booths were placed so that the vision of both commissioners and observers was obscured.

Finally, some confusion arose because of the language used on ballots. Six of the seven ballots in Romanian-speaking villages were printed in Romanian. The seventh ballot, however, was in Russian.

II. Regional Profile

Chernivtsi oblast is one of the youngest in Ukraine. Falling under Soviet rule only in 1940, the oblast, then known as Bukovina, is home to a large population of ethnic Moldovans and Romanians. The oblast occupies about 8,100 square kilometers in southwestern Ukraine. It is bordered by Romania and Moldova to the south, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast to the west, Ternopil and Khmelnitskiy oblasts to the north and the Vinnytsia oblast to the east. Administratively, Chernivtsi is further divided into 11 districts, 11 municipalities, eight towns and 398 villages.

Although Chernivtsi's terrain is hilly and comparatively poorly developed for agriculture, the industry still plays a significant role in the oblast's economy. More than 110,800 hectares of land have been offered for private use by the oblast's citizens. The number of private farms is growing every year. This mix of collective and private farms produce grain cultures, sugar beets potatoes, vegetables, fruit, flax, milk, eggs, pork, beef and poultry.

Property reformation has contributed to the privatization of more than 600 enterprises in the oblast. Of these enterprises, about 42 percent are service oriented, about 30 percent are trade and public catering services and about 13 percent are industrial enterprises. Chemical, metal work, machine building and instrument manufacturing industries continue to develop as well as the light, food and timber industries. Almost all of Ukraine's oil-processing equipment is produced here.

Similar to other areas of western Ukraine, Chernivtsi is much more Europe-oriented than other parts of the country. Its location on the borders of Romania and Moldova produce more nationalistic and ethnically-based opinions, and residents look more often toward the West, not Russia, as Ukraine's best political and economic partner.

Pro-reform political parties in Chernivtsi oblast are very fragmented with none holding an advantage in either membership or strength. Rukh, Hromada, the Green Party of Ukraine, the People's Democratic Party of Ukraine and the National Front electoral bloc maintain varying degrees of party organization.

III. Regional Briefings

The IRI team arrived in Chernivsti prior to election day and held meetings with local media representatives, election commissioners and oblast Rada executives. These meetings yielded valuable insight concerning campaign, election administration and voter issues.

IRI also held separate meetings with local party leaders to gain political input on the election. The team met with Volodymir Velykholova, the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine's (United) parliamentary candidate, and Heorhiy Manchulenko, Rukh's local chairman and member of parliament.

Both party leaders expressed deep concern to the IRI team regarding the late passage of the election law. Because the law was adopted so close to the election date, the party leaders felt that they lost time to adequately prepare their campaigns. In addition, Mr. Velykholova noted that the election commission did not have adequate representation from all parties as required by law.

Mr. Velykholova and Mr. Manchulenko also reported possible ballot and voter list falsification. Many of the ballots and campaign materials were not printed in government printing houses as required and did not list the name of the printer. The parties issued a number of complaints to the election commission but did not receive satisfactory responses. Mr. Velykholova expressed concern to the IRI team that the number of observers at each polling site would be limited, which would keep some of their observers out of the station.

IRI met with Vesyl Boichuk of the Oblast Election Commission and discussed the commission's preparations for the election. Mr. Boichuk explained that the commission received election materials from the CEC just before the deadline, which made it difficult to distribute the materials to the local commissions before the election. The oblast commission also had received only half of the money they were expecting from the CEC to administer the elections. Mr. Boichuk told the IRI team that all local commissioners received some kind of training on election procedures. Most of the commissioners attended training sessions, while some only benefited from training materials sent by mail. He also noted that party observers were very poorly trained. The commission received several complaints, most of which pertained to names omitted from voter lists.

The team held individual meetings with deputy chairman of the oblast Rada George Khalyts and executive administrator of the oblast Rada Rusnak Artemiyovych. Mr. Khalyts did not express any great concern regarding the election and was satisfied with the support Chernivtsi received from the CEC. He believed that the commissions prepared as well as possible for the elections.

Mr. Artemiyovych detailed the oblast's election preparation. He drew attention to inadequate funding from the CEC, and he expressed his concern about the mechanisms for dealing with election complaints. He estimated that almost 90 percent of oblast level election commissioners participated in training seminars, while at the local level all commissioners participated.

IRI further explored the role of the media in the Chernivtsi elections by meeting with local journalists. The team met with the editor of Molody Bukovinets, a nationwide weekly published in Ukrainian, who raised concerns that journalists may have received money from certain candidates in exchange for positive coverage. He also revealed that certain election commissions were providing money to only selected candidates. However, he did not have any evidence to support his assumptions.

IRI's team spoke with the editor of New Bukovina Gazette, Hanna Zadorozhna, about media coverage of the elections. She explained that New Bukovina published the election law as well as the names of political party candidates. Ms. Zadorozna informed IRI that she believed election coverage in the local media was generally fair.

IV. Election Day

The Chernivtsi team observed the opening of a polling site in Hlyboka, a small town in the southern part of the oblast. This site experienced confusion as commissioners were not prepared to open by 7 a.m. Commissioners were busy crossing out one of the invalidated names on the ballots by hand and were sealing the ballot boxes at 7:10 a.m. One domestic poll watcher was present but only after the boxes had been sealed. By 7:35 the station was much more organized, and the voters who had been waiting outside the station were allowed to enter and cast their ballots.

Throughout election day, the Chernivtsi team observed balloting at 15 polling stations. The randomly chosen schedule allowed for observations at sites in both rural and urban areas. The team also observed balloting at a military institution and a prison facility. Both military voters and prisoners were insistent that they were making a free choice; they said no one told them for whom to vote nor did they feel pressure to vote for a particular candidate or party.

IRI observed balloting via the mobile box for ill voters. Three commissioners accompanied the box and stood around the voter as he or she marked the ballots. One woman merely went into a back room to vote. Many of the elderly needed physical assistance in voting.

The IRI team witnessed the closing of a polling station located at a Ministry of Internal Affairs detention center in the city of Chernivtsi. At 10:05 p.m., the chairman of the election commission broke the seal on the box and emptied the ballots. All eight election commissioners were present. One other election observer from a mayoral candidate was present. The counting occurred in a conference room in the executive offices of the prison. The commissioners took their responsibilities seriously and adequately fulfilled their duties. The commitment of these eight commissioners to the process of elections was inspiring.

There was one anomalous result: in the race for mayor, one candidate received 158 votes while no other candidate received more than 10. Moreover, this was the same candidate who had an election observer present for part of the count. However, nothing questionable was observed either on the ballots or in the process.

V. Post Election

The observation team observed election commissioners complete vote tabulation and package the ballots. IRI obtained a copy of the minutes and followed the commissioners as they delivered the ballots to the constituency election commission.



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Chernivtsi Oblast Exit Poll Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998 International Republican Institute

(Chernivtsi - 19 Respondents: Results are unofficial, based only on the responses of interested voters after departing polling stations. Responses were gathered in a non-scientific method and are not intended to be statistically valid.)

1) The voting instructions were:

Easy to understand	52.6%
Somewhat complicated	47.3%
Very difficult to understand	0%

2) What source did you rely on most for political information for the election? (Pick one)

Television	52.6%
Radio	10.5%
Newspaper	15.7%
Posters, other literature	5.2%
Meeting the candidates	15.7%
Party/election bloc label	0%
Friend/relative or spouse	0%

3) Thinking about all the pre-election information you had, did you find that you:

Had more than enough information to make an informed decision 21.0%

Had about the right amount of information to make an informed decision

Had not enough information to make an informed decision

15.7%

63.1%

4) What qualities were most important in the candidates and parties you supported?

Someone I trust 26.3%

I agree with the policies advocated by

the candidate/political party 26.3%

One who will work hard to make

life better for people 47.3%

5) What do you think the top priority of the new Rada ought to be?

Political stability 31.5%

Economic reform 68.4%

Stopping corruption in government 21.0%

Reducing crime 26.3%

Ukrainian sovereignty 15.7%

Other 0%

6) Which best describes the impact of your vote?

My vote is important to Ukrainian

democracy 5.2%

Voting helps determine Ukraine's future 78.9%

Elections are already determined by those in power	5.2%
Nothing will change	5.2%

7) What is your opinion about the mixed-election system?

are represented in the Rada	52.6%
Should have only a proportional system	10.5%
Should have only single-mandate system	26.3%
It makes no difference	5.2%
Don't understand the system	0%

8) Who would you like to see elected president in 1999?

President Leonid Kuchma	31.5%
Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz	21.0%
National Security Advisor Volodymyr Horbulin	5.2%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	0%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	10.5%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	10.5%
Other	15.7%

9) Who is responsible for Ukraine's problems today? (Pick one)

President Leonid Kuchma 47.3%

Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 10.5%

National Security Advisor

Volodymyr Horbulin	0%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	0%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	5.2%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	0%
Other	15.7%
10) Sex	
Male	42.1%
Female	31.5%
11) Member of a political party?	
Yes	15.7%
No	57.7%

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Autonomous Republic of Crimea Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998

I. Summary

IRI observer Powell Moore and staff member Chris Holzen observed balloting in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Upon arriving in the capital city of Simferopol on the morning of March 28, the observation team held meetings with political party representatives, candidates, domestic pollwatchers and election administration officials. In addition, several informal meetings with an international observation team from the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) occurred.

On Sunday, March 29, the IRI observation team visited 12 polling sites in six cities across the Crimean peninsula. In general, the implementation of the elections and adherence to the new electoral code by officials at the polling sites appeared normal. However, several instances of electoral irregularities were observed throughout the day. With the exception of one incident, the irregularities observed seemed to be a result of confusion or unpreparedness on the part of voters and election workers and not intentional attempts to illegally influence the polling results.

II. Regional Profile

The Autonomous Republic of Crimea is located in southern Ukraine on the Crimean peninsula. It is connected to mainland Ukraine by the narrow Perekopskiy isthmus. The republic is bordered in the south and west by the Black Sea and to the east by the Sea of Azov. The area of the peninsula is 27,000 square kilometers, which accounts for 4.5 percent of the total territory of Ukraine.

Crimea has a multifaceted industrial complex. Food processing, chemical, mechanical engineering and metal working are all among the highest producers in the region. There are more than 170 joint ventures registered in Crimea with main partners from Germany, Turkey and Russia. Its enterprises have trade relations with more than 80 countries including the United States, Germany, Greece, Turkey, Italy, Great Britain, India, Israel, Bulgaria and numerous countries in the former Soviet Union. The major exports for the region are televisions, alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks, fish, fruit and vegetables.

The current situation in Crimea is heavily disputed. In 1954, Soviet leader Nikita

Kruschev gave the peninsula to Ukraine in celebration of the 300th anniversary of the unification of Russia and Ukraine. When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, the territory was considered part of Ukraine, although many Russians and Crimeans objected because ethnic Russians formed the largest national grouping in Crimea since 1944. (In 1944, Josef Stalin expelled Crimean Tatars and resettled Russians there in an attempt to eradicate all traces of Crimea's original culture.)

The debate has further persisted with negotiations on the division of the decaying Black Sea Fleet based at Sevastopol. In 1997, Ukraine and Russia signed a treaty dividing the fleet.

Crimea's political party environment is dominated by pro-Russia, anti-Kyiv groups, formerly active with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Crimea's delegation to the Verkhovna Rada is exclusively pro-Russian, as is the majority in the Crimean assembly.

However, democratic forces refuse to abandon the peninsula, despite the hostility to Ukraine nationhood prevalent among the Russian community. Rukh is the largest of the national-democratic, pro-Ukraine parties, and the Party of Economic Rebirth of Crimea joined the centrist Democratic Party in an election bloc to achieve placement on the proportional ballot.

III. Regional Briefings

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IRI's observation team arrived in Crimea prior to elections and held meetings with political party leaders and representatives from the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU). The team also met with Crimean Central Election Officials. These meetings provided IRI with valuable insight not only on the political and administrative issues in the region as well as voter issues. On Saturday March 28, the team witnessed demonstrations by the Crimean Tartar population, who were protesting their lack of voting privileges in next day's election.

The observation team met with Svetlana Borisina Savchenko, leader of the "Soyuz" (Union) party, a Crimean based party that promotes closer ties to Russia and Belarus. A large portrait of Belarus President Alexander Lukashenka hung prominently in the party's headquarters. Later in the meeting, IRI spoke with Verkhovna Rada deputy and candidate for reelection, Lev Mirimskiy. Deputy Mirimskiy was reelected the following day.

Both representatives described the late passage of the election law as having been problematic for all parties as they had little time to become familiar with all election provisions. Both predicted a large voter turnout in Crimea. The difficult economic situation and Russian language disputes were regarded as the most widely debated issues of the campaign season. Asked to distinguish the difference between the Soyuz and Communist Parties, Savchenko said the platform of a greater Russian union was something they had in common with the Communist Party but that Soyuz supported free market economic reforms.

Soyuz leaders claimed that during the collection of signatures for placement on the ballot, some people who had signed their petition were later threatened by unknown individuals, demanding that the signers request Soyuz strike their name from the petition. Soyuz claimed that this intimidation was conducted by members of the People's Democratic Party. Again, no proof was offered to substantiate the charge.

In the afternoon, the team observed a protest rally by Crimean Tartars in the middle of the city. Security forces, which seemed to outnumber the protesters, were armed with clubs and protected by riot shields and helmets. The city deployed armored personnel carriers. The Tartar's protest obviously focused on the failure of the Ukrainian government to reinstate their voting franchise in the wake of their return from exile in Uzbekistan. Crimean Tartars were expelled from Crimea in the 1940s by Josef Stalin in the interest of removing their Musliminfluenced culture from the strategic peninsula.

IRI met with the chairman of the Communist Party of Crimea, former Communist Party First Secretary Leonid I. Grach. Also in attendance was Communist Party member and ethnic Tatar Lentun R. Bezaziyev. Mr. Bezaziyev is president of the joint venture company "Crimea-Ros," which operates a chain of gas stations across the Crimean peninsula. Mr. Grach stated that he felt the Tatar situation was just a mask for different forces at play in a power struggle for business on the peninsula, though he did not indicate who exactly was behind it. He also indicated that every polling site in Crimea would have a Communist Party pollwatcher. On election day, his remarks proved accurate as IRI encountered Communist Party observers at all polling sites IRI visited.

Outside the Communist Party headquarters was a display easily read by passers-by on how to mark your ballot in favor of communists (a sample ballot with #11 clearly marked). The communists appeared to be the most organized party in Crimea in the final days of the campaign and on election day.

The observation team met with Vladyslav Yelshin, local chairman of the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU). To maximize observation coverage, the IRI team and Mr. Yelshin discussed the territories where the CVU planned to conduct their observations with local non-partisan activists. As they seemed to be covering mostly the northern territories of Crimea, IRI agreed to focus on the southern portion.

After this meeting, IRI had a brief meeting with Vadim K. Mordashov, deputy vice chairman of the Crimean election commission. IRI asked if prisoners would be permitted to vote, and, if so, where it would occur. Mr. Mordashov informed IRI that prisoners would not be voting in Crimea, clearly a contradiction in that week's ruling of Ukraine's Constitutional Court. Mr. Mordashov stated that Crimea is not a part of Ukraine and therefore not bound by the rulings of its court system.

IRI met informally with Christina Danielsson of the OSCE-ODHIR election observation mission to Ukraine. Observation coordinates were exchanged.

IV. Election Day

Election day began with the IRI team observing election commissioners opening a polling site in Simferopol. The team arrived at the polling station at 6:30 a.m. The concern that confusion would be created by that day's switch from daylight savings time was proven unwarranted as all poll workers were present before the opening of the site. All necessary materials were ready by 7 a.m., and voting began when the first voter arrived shortly after 7:05 a.m.

This same polling site was where the team decided to observe poll closing and vote counting. Again, there appeared to be no irregularities in the ballot counting and tabulation process. The manner in which the counting was done, though time consuming and somewhat inefficient, was nonetheless done according to CEC regulations. Tabulation started at approximately 10:15 p.m. and completed at 4:30 a.m. The majority of time was spent separating the seven ballots.

One instance of extreme irregularity observed by IRI was at a polling station in the city of Bakchisaraiy, where a senior military officer was marking ballots for soldiers. The soldiers received their ballots in the proper fashion and then handed their ballots to the officer. After marking the ballots for the enlistees, the officer handed back the ballots and instructed the soldiers to go place them in the ballot box. This was brought to the attention of the chairman of the polling site, but he seemed hesitant to correct the situation. It was doubtful that he was actually in charge of his own polling site. Local observers were asked if they were aware of the situation; they indicated they were, but that they didn't know what to do about it.

Other irregularities observed were people voting outside booths, a lack of queue discipline causing confusion as people gathered around tables, more than one person at a time voting in a booth, and the presence of people who were not voters or observers loitering in the polling sites and around the ballot boxes. Though these irregularities can call into question the integrity of the balloting, they seemed in most cases to be results of simple political immaturity.

Concerning the issue of the Tatars in Crimea, those who were with Ukrainian passports encountered no obstacles in voting. IRI's translator, an ethnic Tatar and Ukrainian national, was a registered voter at one polling site and encountered no discrimination as he freely cast his ballot. An ethnic Tatar was elected to the Verkhovna Rada in district #8 with a plurality of votes. Also, Mustafa Dzemilev, chairman of the Mejlis, was elected from Crimea on Rukh's proportional ballot.

Most chairmen of polling sites had served as poll workers in previous elections, though

many of the workers of the site were serving in their positions for the first time. Poll workers seemed to be generally knowledgeable of the election law. The poll operations manual provided by the International Foundation for Elections Systems was observed being used at several of the sites IRI visited.

Though voters had every reason to be confused by the multiple ballots, informal conversation with voters and general observation was that the number of ballots simply added to the time it took to vote. Most voters, even the very elderly, were not overly confused by the multiple ballots.

IV. Post Election

IRI observed election commissioners complete ballot counting at the same station in which they observed the opening of election day. The process took the majority of the evening to complete and commissioners finished the minutes at approximately 4:30 a.m. No irregularities in the process were apparent. IRI's Crimea team then followed the commissioners as they delivered the sealed ballots to the constituency election commission. In conclusion, the IRI team in Crimea felt the election was generally transparent.



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Autonomous Republic of Crimea Exit Poll Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998 International Republican Institute

(Crimea - 18 Respondents: Results are unofficial, based only on the responses of interested voters after departing polling stations. Responses were gathered in a non-scientific method and are not intended to be statistically valid.)

1) The voting instructions were:

Easy to understand	55.5%
Somewhat complicated	33.3%
Very difficult to understand	0%

2) What source did you rely on most for political information for the election? (Pick one)

Television	38.8%
Radio	0%
Newspaper	5.5%
Posters, other literature	16.6%
Meeting the candidates	16.6%
Party/election bloc label	11.1%
Friend/relative or spouse	11.1%

3) Thinking about all the pre-election information you had, did you find that you:

Had more than enough information to make an informed decision 38.8%

Had about the right amount of information to make an informed decision

22.2%

Had not enough information to make an informed decision

27.7%

4) What qualities were most important in the candidates and parties you supported?

Someone I trust 16.6%

I agree with the policies advocated by the candidate/political party 33.3%

One who will work hard to make

life better for people 16.6%

5) What do you think the top priority of the new Rada ought to be?

Political stability 16.6%

Economic reform 38.8%

Stopping corruption in government 55.5%

Reducing crime 11.1%

Ukrainian sovereignty 0%

Other 0%

6) Which best describes the impact of your vote?

My vote is important to Ukrainian

democracy 44.4%

Voting helps determine Ukraine's future 16.6%

Elections are already determined by	
those in power	16.6%
Nothing will change	11.1%

7) What is your opinion about the mixed-election system?

It will ensure that majority views are represented in the Rada	38.8%
Should have only a proportional system	16.6%
Should have only single-mandate system	33.3%
It makes no difference	0%
Don't understand the system	0%

8) Who would you like to see elected president in 1999?

President Leonid Kuchma	11.1%
Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz	16.6%
National Security Advisor Volodymyr Horbulin	5.5%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	16.6%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	5.5%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	16.6%
Other	16.6%

9) Who is responsible for Ukraine's problems today? (Pick one)

President Leonid Kuchma 55.5%

Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 5.5%

National Security Advisor

Volodymyr Horbulin	0%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	5.5%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	0%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	0%
Other	0%
10) Sex	
Male	27.7%
Female	27.7%
11) Member of a political party?	
Yes	11.1%
No	50.0%

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Donetsk Oblast Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998

I. Summary

IRI deployed two observation teams to Donetsk oblast. Team #1 consisted of delegate Mary Mills Dunea and IRI Program Officer Brian C. Keeter. Delegate Cory Flohr and Olyna Skripka, an IRI contract employee, constituted team #2.

Teams arrived the day prior to the elections and held meetings with political party leaders, a journalist and the chairman of the oblast election commission. These meetings yielded, among other issues, a significant level of concern about the conduct of polling station election commissioners, the impartiality of the media and the limited resources available to local election commissions.

Combined, the two teams observed balloting at 22 polling stations throughout the oblast. In general, IRI delegates and staff witnessed high voter turnout, organized polling stations and election commissioners dedicated to their responsibilities. No systematic violations of the election law were observed, although irregularities occurred at most voting sites. The most routine of these was the practice of "community voting" as family members and/or friends voted together in a ballot booth designed to allow secret voting by individuals. Voting outside the ballot box was also common.

Some polling locations were too small to accommodate the number of voters within the election district. In these instances, the large number of voters in a restricted space caused an atmosphere of confusion.

One case of voter intimidation was observed by team #2. Bodyguards hired by a local candidate were an unsettling presence in a polling station dominated by blue-collar workers.

II. Regional Profile

Donetsk, in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, is one of the country's largest cities with a population of approximately 1.1 million. More than 5 million people live in the oblast, most of them in urban areas. The region is very close to the Russian border and home to a large

Ukrainian population who have close ties with Russia.

The transportation system of Donetsk oblast is adequately developed and provides an important link between Ukraine and the countries of Europe and Asia. Nearly two-fifths of the country's freight is carried by Donetsk's largest railway. The port city of Mariupol is the oblast's sea gate to the world. Located on the Sea of Azov, this city provides the Donetsk oblast with a key connection to the Black Sea. The city of Donetsk also operates an international airport.

The Donbas region of the oblast is rich in natural resources. Nearly half of Ukraine's coal reserve can be found here. More than 119 mines, factories, mine equipment repair shops, scientific research and designing institutes comprise the region's coal industry. About one-third of Donetsk's industry labor force work in these enterprises. The local government has taken several measures to reform the coal industry. Its goal is to make all mines economically independent and to cut the costs of coal extraction. By cutting costs, the coal industry hopes to make its goods more competitive on the foreign market.

As in other oblasts of Ukraine, political parties in Donetsk confront a general public preoccupied with the challenges of daily life, which often leaves little or no time for political involvement. In Donetsk, however, parties are confronted with additional competition from strong trade unions representing miners and railway workers. The unions have thrived because of their large membership and ability to successfully organize strikes, which are often staged because of back wages owed to them by the government.

In Donetsk, pro-reform political parties fall into two general categories. High membership parties such as the Liberal Party of Ukraine (LPU), InterRegional Bloc of Reforms and the Peoples Democratic Party are cautious in their statements about sovereignty and nationalism. On the other side of the nationalist issue, Rukh, the Republican Party and the Christian Democratic Party loudly defend Ukrainian sovereignty.

The Liberal Party is one of the most popular pro-democratic parties in the region. Its membership dramatically increased in Donetsk oblast during 1995 and 1996, at which time party leaders claimed LPU was second among all parties in nationwide membership. The Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) is first.

In Donetsk, the CPU is well organized and provides strong competition to regional reform parties. The CPU finds strong support among the oblast's coal miners, pensioners, trade union members and industrial workers. The Agrarian Party of Ukraine is another leftist party strong in the region.

III. Regional Briefings

On Saturday, March 28, both observation teams met with various political party representatives, the editor of the largest circulation newspaper in the oblast and the chairman of the oblast election commission. These meetings provided valuable insight on the conduct of the regional campaign and the numerous issues affecting voter attitudes and election administration.

Individual meetings with leading officials from the People's Democratic Party (PDP); the Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU), part of the Socialists/Peasants electoral bloc; and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (CUN), part of the National Front electoral bloc, provided political input from across the ideological spectrum. IRI met with Mr. Valeriy Chernishyov, head of the Donetsk secretariat of the PDP; Mr. Oleg Rybakov, chair of the Donetsk Oblast SPU and vice chair of the Donetsk Rada; Verkhovna Rada Deputy Serhiy Kiashko, general secretary of the Donetsk Oblast SPU; and Mr. Ihor Zavgorodny, a CUN member who represented the National Front on the oblast election commission.

Party representatives expressed several common concerns about the following day's vote, the foremost being the potential for widespread bias on the part of polling station election commissioners. Interference on the part of oblast administration officials, vulnerability to bribery or outside pressure and election law violations during the counting process were among the potential avenues party representatives believed local election commissions could be compromised.

Second, party officials indicated that their respective parties did not have sufficient membership to provide partisan pollwatchers at all oblast polling stations. The election law, unlike the one that governed the 1994 parliamentary elections, stipulated that political parties on the multi-mandate ballot or with candidates listed on a voting district's single-mandate ballot, were guaranteed representation on the polling station commission. Still, many parties sought to register their members as pollwatchers at as many voting sites as possible, especially in rural areas. Low membership prevented parties from complete coverage of the oblast's polling stations, raising fears that fraud or other election law violations could occur undetected. One official said his party would have only enough pollwatchers to place in "winnable" election districts.

Finally, the party leaders with whom IRI spoke stated that limited access to the news media and media bias were obstacles to the parties' ability to communicate with voters. Examples given to IRI included unequal coverage by state-supported television, bias on the part of privately-owned media and demand for payment by some journalists.

IRI met with Mr. Grigory Gnesdilov, editor of *Life*, the oblast administration newspaper. The IRI observation teams were impressed with the newspaper's extensive coverage of political issues and voter education materials, which exceeded that mandated by the election law. *Life*, as part of its election coverage, published sample ballots, voting instructions and political party

platforms. The newspaper also hosted a telephone hotline that allowed oblast residents to speak directly to numerous elected officials. A transcript of the conversation was printed in the newspaper.

Mr. Valeriy Pereverse, chairman of the oblast election commission and member of the Communist Party of Ukraine, met with the IRI observation teams. He was generally well-informed on election procedures. Although he had experienced no major problems in the election's administration, he said that inadequate funding from the Central Election Commission (CEC) either delayed or limited such activities as voter education and ballot delivery.

IV. Election Day

Election day began with the teams arriving at separate polling stations prior to the start of voting. The voting site visited by team #1 opened slightly later than 7 a.m. Voting was delayed as commissioners had not yet sealed all ballot boxes. A group of about 10 voters were waiting when the station opened. Voting instructions and candidate posters produced by the CEC were positioned in highly-visible locations, although posters for political parties and electoral blocs were not. Ballot boxes were properly sealed and visible to voters, although, due to placement of voting booths, the boxes were not in the line of vision of all election commissioners. There were no signs of fraud or vote tampering.

The polling station at which team #2 observed its opening commenced voting on time at 7 a.m. As with the station visited by team #1, voting was orderly and election commissioners were mostly knowledgeable about election procedures. However, candidate and political party/electoral bloc materials from the CEC were not publicly displayed but only available in a room one floor above the polling station.

After observing the opening of polling stations, the IRI teams traveled separately to randomly selected voting sites for the remainder of the election. Nearly each polling station visited had a large number of voters, often waiting in long lines, who were enthusiastically exercising their right to vote. Observation teams, for the most part, found polling stations with orderly voting and competent election commissioners. There were, however, notable exceptions as well as various irregularities that were common to numerous voting sites.

The most consistent irregularity was the prevalence of "community voting." Although booths that allowed private voting were available at each polling station, IRI found groups of two or more voters entering booths together and discussing their ballot choices. In addition, many voters, unwilling to wait in line for an available booth, publicly marked their ballots outside the booths.

A lack of ballot security was also noted at numerous polling stations. Stacks of unused ballots were placed on the floor, on tables and other areas easily accessible to anyone in the

vicinity. No one appeared responsible for safeguarding the ballots.

A few of the polling stations visited were very chaotic and confusing for voters, especially the elderly. At these sites, limited space and an exceptionally large voter turnout caused the state of confusion.

Coercion was observed at only one polling station. Located in a mining district with a large number of blue-collar workers, this voting site was attended by several bodyguards hired by a local candidate. Although not verbally instructing voters, the bodyguards' presence and visual examination of voters was deemed intimidating and frightening.

One observation team visited a polling station at a military academy. Election administration at this site was the most organized and methodical of all the stations visited. However, there was evidence that some younger soldiers received instruction from their superiors about for whom to vote.

During observation of vote tabulation, conducted at separate polling stations, both IRI teams found election commissioners adequately informed on proper counting procedures and also dedicated to accurately completing a rather tedious process. Numerous domestic partisan observers were also present at these polling stations. No attempts at fraud were observed.

Team #1 was faced with an interesting situation when the election commission chairman asked their opinion regarding the validity of an unusually marked ballot. IRI staff and delegate responded that their role was only to observe, not advise or interfere.

The only major irregularity observed was by team #2, which found election commissioners already tabulating ballot control checks 15 minutes prior to the close of voting.

V. Post-Election

IRI visited the raion election commission the day following the elections, Monday, at 3 p.m. Minutes from polling stations within the commission's jurisdiction were not yet available.



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Donetsk Oblast Exit Poll Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998 International Republican Institute

(Donetsk - 21 Respondents: Results are unofficial, based only on responses from interested voters after departing polling stations. Responses were gathered in a non-scientific method and are not intended to be statistically valid.)

1) The voting instructions were:

Easy to understand 52.3%

Somewhat complicated 47.6%

Very difficult to understand 0%

2) What source did you rely on most for political information for the election? (Pick one)

Television	42.8%
Radio	9.5%
Newspaper	38.1%
Posters, other literature	4.7%
Meeting the candidates	19.0%
Party/election bloc label	4.7%
Friend/relative or spouse	4.7%

3) Thinking about all the pre-election information you had, did you find that you:

19

Had more than enough information to make an informed decision 19.0%

Had about the right amount of information to make an informed decision

Had not enough information to make an informed decision 42.8%

4) What qualities were most important in the candidates and parties you supported?

42.8%

Someone I trust 28.5%

I agree with the policies advocated by the candidate/political party 61.9%

One who will work hard to make life better for people 14.2%

5) What do you think the top priority of the new Rada ought to be?

Political stability 0%

Economic reform 61.9%

Stopping corruption in government 42.8%

Reducing crime 33.3%

Ukrainian sovereignty 0%

Other 19.0%

6) Which best describes the impact of your vote?

My vote is important to Ukrainian democracy

25.5%

Voting helps determine Ukraine's future 47.6%

Elections are already determined by those in power	19.0%
Nothing will change	14.2%

7) What is your opinion about the mixed-election system?

It will ensure that majority views are represented in the Rada	33.3%
Should have only a proportional system	33.3%
Should have only single-mandate system	14.2%
It makes no difference	28.5%
Don't understand the system	0%

8) Who would you like to see elected president in 1999?

President Leonid Kuchma	4.7%
Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz	14.2%
National Security Advisor Volodymyr Horbulin	14.2%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	0%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	9.5%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	19.0%
Other	47.6%

9) Who is responsible for Ukraine's problems today? (Pick one)

President Leonid Kuchma 66.6%

Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 9.5%

National Security Advisor

Volodymyr Horbulin	9.5%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	9.5%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	4.7%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	4.7%
Other	9.5%
10) Sex	
Male	38.1%
Female	38.1%
11) Member of a political party?	
Yes	14.2%
No	61.9%

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Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998

I. Summary

Elections in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast were observed by Mayor James Garner and IRI staff member Mary Schwarz. The deployment team arrived on Saturday, March 28, and held meetings with media representatives, local party leaders, constituency election commissioners and representatives from the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU). On election day, the team observed balloting at eight polling stations.

The IRI team paid particular attention to the role of the church in these elections. There were two priests running for the Ivano-Frankivsk city council. Priests had been instructed by the bishops that while the Greek Orthodox church encouraged the clerics' activities and even candidacies to mayoral and city council seats, they were not allowed to run for higher office. The bishops believed that religious candidates in national offices represented a conflict between church and state roles. Leaders from the Republican Christian Party of Ukraine told IRI that the activity of the church is much more prevalent and influential in the rural areas of the oblast than in the city.

On election day, IRI's team witnessed several irregularities. However, no serious attempt to falsify the balloting process was apparent. The team attributed the mistakes made to a lack of balloting experience on behalf of both the voters and election commissioners and an unfamiliarity with the election law.

II. Regional Profile

The Ivano-Frankivsk oblast occupies 14 thousand square kilometers of land in western Ukraine near the Carpathian Mountains and the Dnestr River. Ternopil and Chernivtsi oblasts make up its western border. It is also bordered by Romania to the south; Uzhgorod oblast to the west and Lviv oblast to the north. The city of Ivano-Frankivsk was founded in 1661 as a Polish town. It came under communist rule in 1939 when Germany and Russia divided Poland. Local residents resisted Moscow's control until Ukraine gained its independence in 1991. The oblast is divided into 14 administrative districts, five cities, 39 municipalities and 761 villages.

Ivano-Frankivsk oblast ranks fourth in Ukraine in the rate of industrial production. The industrial potential of the region is focused primarily in the cities of Ivano-Frankivsk, Kolomyia, Kalush, Nadvirna and Dolyna. More than 270 enterprises, corporations and joint stock companies of various industries are now functioning in the region.

Since living standards in Ivano-Frankivsk, similar to other areas in western Ukraine, typically exceed those in the industrial east, "pocketbook issues" are not always the most prevalent on the minds of voters. Ukrainian sovereignty and nationalistic themes often dominate the political debate.

National democratic parties are well-represented in Ivano-Frankivsk. The Republican Christian Party of Ukraine (RCPU) is the leading party. Other strong parties in the region include Rukh, Hromada and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, which was part of the National Front electoral bloc. Democratic political party youth auxiliaries, whose members are in their teens and twenties, are very active in local political events.

Because of Ivano-Frankivsk's west-leaning orientation, leftist political parties are not strong in the region. The Agrarian Party holds the greatest membership of parties in this category, due largely to the sizable agricultural community in the oblast.

III. Regional Briefings

IRI's deployment team arrived in Ivano-Frankivsk and held meetings with local media representatives, constituency election commissioners and representatives from the CVU prior to election day. These meetings yielded valuable insight to the regional issues surrounding voters and administrators.

Individual meetings were also held with the leaders of three local political parties: Mr. Igor Banah, chairman of the Republican Christian Party of Ukraine (RCPU); Mr. Oleg Pylypjuk, chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP); and Mr. Oleg Senjutka, chairman of the Reforms and Order Party.

Both the RCPU and PDP ran candidates in all six constituencies in the oblast; Reforms and Order nominated candidates in four of the six constituencies. All parties agreed that most media outlets were generally fair in their coverage and felt no overt bias toward a particular party or candidate. They felt very little pressure to pay journalists for fair coverage and all parties agreed that the media was no hindrance to their performances.

Each of the parties IRI spoke with used door-to-door campaign techniques, which the party leaders thought were very effective. One of the party leaders expressed his concern about the lack of voter education activities conducted by the oblast election commission.

IRI's deployment team met with two media representatives, editor-in-chief of Galychyna TV, Olga Babiy, and editor-in-chief of TV Channel 402, Yaroslav Gnes. Both of these individuals were candidates in the election. Ms. Babiy ran for the Verkhovna Rada, nominated as a candidate by the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists in constituency #84. Mr. Gnes was a candidate to the Ivano-Frankivsk city council.

Asked if her candidacy caused a conflict of objectivity in her work, Ms. Babiy, who heads the only state-run, oblast-wide television station, stressed that she did not take free airtime on her station but instead purchased advertising. She indicated that she made deliberate efforts to maintain an independent perspective and kept her candidacy separate from her professional activities. When the IRI delegation asked leaders of other political parties about the appearance of conflict with her candidacy and professional position, they did not have any concerns. They believed that Babiy was a professional and acted as such in her campaign.

Although questions to both members of the media were focused on the Rada campaigns, they both said that the Ivano-Frankivsk mayoral campaign was much more interesting to the public. Galychyna TV allowed free airtime for Rada candidates but did not sponsor debates; there was much more interest in debates between mayoral candidates. In conjunction with the local election commission, Channel 402 also conducted debates between the mayoral candidates.

Out of the 24 candidates to the Rada in constituency #84 (the city of Ivano-Frankivsk makes up one complete Rada district; the five remaining districts in the oblast are in the outer rural and mountainous areas), ten candidates purchased airtime on Channel 402. Rates for political ads are higher than those for typical commercial ads.

Both editors believed that the Rada campaigns were run in a professional manner by the candidates. They stated that although political parties are still weak in Ivano-Frankivsk, society was becoming more structured and parties were slowly developing. However, they did criticize the parliamentary candidates for running weak and uninteresting campaigns.

The IRI team also met with the chairman of a local election district. The election commission chairman informed IRI that there had been extensive problems with the development of the voter lists due to the late arrival of materials from the Central Election Commission (CEC).

In addition, the commission chairman acknowledged that some commissioners were new to their posts and therefore did not possess a complete understanding of the election law and procedures. The constituency election commission had conducted training seminars for the chairmen who were then instructed to conduct training for polling station commissioners. However, according to the chairman, the constituency election commission received only approximately 40 percent of the funds it was due from the CEC, which hampered some of these training efforts.

The chairman expressed concern that the constituency election commission did not have the power to actually enforce the election law. He believed that the commission could not ensure that candidates and political parties abided by the law as there was no recourse or action that the election commissions were allowed to take against law-breakers.

The political parties IRI spoke with believed that the active participation of the CVU was important to the level of education of voters and the transparency of the elections. The IRI delegation met with Lybomyr Chorniy, the chairman of the local CVU organization. The organization had developed both television and written materials for citizens on how to vote and guidelines for election day. The written materials had four variations, targeted at different groups including general voters, the media, domestic observers and election commissioners. The Ivano-Frankivsk chapter distributed 10,000 fliers, both through general distribution on the street and at special kiosks established to educate voters. The CVU also trained many pollwatchers and scheduled them to cover polling sites throughout the oblast.

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IV. Election Day

The IRI team visited eight polling stations in three Rada constituencies on election day. These stations included sites within the city of Ivano-Frankivsk, rural districts to the north of the city and the mountainous districts to the south of the city. The team also observed voting via a mobile ballot box.

IRI observed the opening of a polling station in the city of Ivano-Frankivsk. When the team entered the site, the election commissioners were crossing three Rada candidates off the ballots due to the withdrawal of their candidacies after the ballots had been published. The chairman of the election commission had received a telephone call with this advisory but had not received notice in writing. The opening of this polling site was conducted properly, and it was evident the commissioners understood their responsibilities.

Approximately one-third of the election commissioners with whom the IRI team spoke had previously served as election commissioners. Although commissioners had a very limited amount of time and resources to fulfill their responsibilities, they appeared to have enough general knowledge to do their work. However, it was apparent to the IRI team that many procedural details were left unattended, a situation likely caused by their lack of experience rather than an overt attempt to break the law or ignore the will of the voters.

IRI repeatedly witnessed "community voting" at each of the stations. The team attributed this problem to two factors. First, voters were faced with a large number of candidates and parties on the ballots; and, second, the polling sites had only a limited number of voting booths.

The IRI team noted the activities of domestic observers. While domestic observers stated that they had received training and many had forms and checklists to use, there was very little

proactive efforts on their part to closely monitor the balloting.

The IRI team followed a mobile ballot box to a local hospital in the village of Kalosh. Only two members of the election commission (as opposed to three as stipulated in the election law) accompanied the box. Commissioners did not make provisions for patients to vote in secret. Patients, with hospital staff present, were told to sit at a table to vote. A domestic observer who was present repeatedly stated objections to this arrangement but was ignored by the commissioners and the hospital staff.

Patients told the IRI team that they had enough information to make an educated decision on which candidates to vote for in the Rada elections. They viewed several advertisements for the political parties, electoral blocs and candidates on television. Fliers and other written materials were distributed throughout the hospital, and a number of candidates held informational meetings.

The IRI team decided to return to a previously visited hospital polling station in Ivano-Frankivsk to observe the closing of polls and vote tabulation. Irregular counting procedures, such as sealing ballots prior to the completion of the polling station's minutes, twice caused the commission to open the sealed packages and recount the ballots. In addition, ostensibly due to the late hour, commissioners were signing blank minutes that were subsequently completed once the correct numbers were determined.

While the election commissioners at this site had a basic understanding of counting and tabulation procedures, they had difficulty with specific details. For example, the commissioners were not sure which minutes to use for which race. They made several telephone calls to the constituency election commission for clarification.

During the closing, the chairman of the election commission received a telephone call from a member of the local city administration. The caller asked that the chairman deliver a copy of the polling site's minutes to the city administration prior to submitting it to the constituency election commission. Frustrated and obviously pressured, the chairman replied that she had not received a sufficient number of forms so she could not comply with the city's request.

V. Post Election

IRI's deployment team followed the polling station commissioners to the constituency election commission where they submitted the minutes and sealed ballots. The atmosphere at the constituency election commission was hectic but organized.



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Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast Exit Poll Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998 International Republican Institute

(Ivano-Frankivsk - 24 Respondents: Results are unofficial, based only on the responses of interested voters after departing polling stations. Responses were gathered in a non-scientific method and are not intended to be statistically valid.)

1) The voting instructions were:

Easy to understand	70.8%
Somewhat complicated	29.1%
Very difficult to understand	0%

2) What source did you rely on most for political information for the election? (Pick one)

Television	41.6%
Radio	4.1%
Newspaper	0%
Posters, other literature	4.1%
Meeting the candidates	33.3%
Party/election bloc label	8.3%
Friend/relative or spouse	0%

3) Thinking about all the pre-election information you had, did you find that you:

gy.

Had more than enough information to make an informed decision 33.3%

Had about the right amount of information to make an informed decision

Had not enough information to make an informed decision 12.5%

4) What qualities were most important in the candidates and parties you supported?

4.1%

48.5%

Someone I trust 37.5%

I agree with the policies advocated by the candidate/political party 41.6%

One who will work hard to make life better for people 33.3%

5) What do you think the top priority of the new Rada ought to be?

Political stability 25.0%

Economic reform 41.1%

Stopping corruption in government 66.6%

Reducing crime 37.5%

Ukrainian sovereignty 37.5%

6) Which best describes the impact of your vote?

My vote is important to Ukrainian democracy 25.0%

Other

Voting helps determine Ukraine's future 62.5%

Elections are already determined by	
those in power	15.5%

Nothing will change 8.3%

7) What is your opinion about the mixed-election system?

It will ensure that majority views are represented in the Rada 37.5%

Should have only a proportional system 8.3%

Should have only single-mandate system 25.0%

It makes no difference 16.6%

Don't understand the system 0%

8) Who would you like to see elected president in 1999?

President Leonid Kuchma 29.1%

Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 0%

National Security Advisor

Volodymyr Horbulin 4.1%

Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko 0%

Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk 4.1%

National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko 4.1%

9) Who is responsible for Ukraine's problems today? (Pick one)

50.0%

President Leonid Kuchma 20.8%

Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 54.1%

National Security Advisor

Other

Volodýmyr Horbulin	4.1%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	4.1%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	0%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	0%
Other	8.3%
10) C	
10) Sex	
Male	62.5%
Female	25.0%
11) Member of a political party?	
Yes	0%
No	87.5%

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Kharkiv Oblast Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998

I. Summary

Observation delegate Kate Semerad and IRI staff member Lara McDougall observed balloting in Kharkiv oblast during the Verkhovna Rada elections. Kharkiv oblast is administratively divided into 14 separate constituencies. Six of these constituencies, those that touch the oblast capital, voted on seven separate ballots in the election: proportional and majoritarian ballots for the Verkhovna Rada; mayor; oblast, district and local councils and a referendum on an economic free zone within the city. Voters in the remaining constituencies voted on six ballots -- the aforementioned, minus the referendum.

The deployment team arrived the day before elections and met with representatives from political parties, the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU) and a local news station. These representatives expressed concern about the high cost of running a campaign, voter education, youth involvement and the newly adopted election law.

IRI observed balloting at 10 polling sites in the oblast on election day. The team witnessed both the opening and closing of balloting at separate stations and remained through the evening to observe vote tabulation.

II. Regional Profile

Kharkiv oblast, the third most populated oblast in Ukraine, is located in the forest-steppe and steppe zones of the northeast part of the country. It served as the capital of Soviet Ukraine from 1918 to 1934 and has remained a Russophone area.

Kharkiv is one of the largest industrial centers in Ukraine, ranking third after Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts in produced national income. It is also a center for universities and research institutes. Although industry comprises the majority of Kharkiv's economy, the agricultural sector is still adequately developed with a high production of corn, sugar-beets, sunflower seeds, milk and meat.

The Soviet Union's collapse had a severe impact on Kharkiv's economy. Its industrial,

military and scientific complexes, once among the Soviet Union's best, have suffered from falling demand, poor quality control and elimination of state subsidies. The resultant reduction in production has caused not only unemployment and economic hardship but also a yearning for the past, particularly among older residents. Not surprisingly, leftist political parties are very popular.

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Some democratic parties have achieved moderate success, the Liberal Party of Ukraine perhaps being the most successful. The People's Democratic Party also has a strong following, including Oleh Dyomin, the presidentially-appointed acting chairman of the oblast state government.

II. Regional briefings

IRI's deployment team arrived in Kharkiv prior to the elections and conducted meetings with representatives of the CVU, leaders of local political parties and journalists at ATN Television.

The Kharkiv chapter of CVU is a highly energized group of mostly young people. The group conducted voter education programs but concentrated most of its efforts on nonpartisan pollwatching for election day.

Kharkiv has nine television channels, including both independent and state-owned. The general manager of a local, independent channel said in an interview with IRI that about five parties and election blocs, mostly centrist in ideology, utilized the station for advertisements. His station refused air time to political parties and electoral blocs of the far left and far right. The general manager also said that the station's news programs resisted favoring any particular party or candidate up until two days before the election. On that day, the station chose a candidate over others and gave that candidate additional favorable coverage. This candidate was selected because he had just made a large financial contribution to the station.

This same television station hosted a weekly half-hour program during which two local or Verkhovna Rada candidates would face off in debate. The general manager said that little other efforts were made to have candidates on other shows or on the news, because he did not feel that they would have anything worthwhile to say. He commented that these elections seemed to be more about "slogans rather than issues."

Usual advertising rates at the station are approximately \$170 per minute, but the price increased to \$700 per minute as the day of the elections grew near.

The leaders of the Social-Peasant electoral bloc told IRI that they thought the new election law was an improvement from the 1994 election code, although it was not completely to their satisfaction. For example, they would prefer a 25 percent voter turnout threshold to validate

elections.

Social-Peasant bloc leaders also expressed other concerns. They believed that private media in Kharkiv favored political parties other than their own. In addition, they anticipated ballot manipulation, possibly as election commissioners transported tabulated ballots from the polling station to the constituency election commission.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) holds a large percentage of city and local council seats in the oblast. In conversations with IRI representatives, the Kharkiv regional chairman said that PDP used personalities -- its candidates -- to distinguish it from other political parties. PDP leaders expressed satisfaction with the new election law. They predicted that not as many parties would exist following the election as smaller parties would join larger ones or simply cease to exist.

The National Front seemed disillusioned with the campaign process and pessimistic of the election's outcome. Its leaders expressed a deep dissatisfaction with the election law, voting districts and the CEC's handling of their appeals. They also bemoaned the high cost of running for office and the late-night air time their bloc was assigned on state media.

IV. Election day

IRI's deployment team observed the opening of a polling station that, due to general disorganization, did not accept voters until approximately 7:30 a.m. One obstacle was improperly sealed ballot boxes. After domestic observers notified the polling station chairman about the ballot box seals, the commission agreed to reseal all of the boxes in the proper fashion with string, sealing sticker and official stamp.

When voting commenced, election commissioners were unsure of what to do with the ballot control checks. Ultimately, control checks were placed in unsecured stacks in a window sill.

Election officials at some of the polling stations IRI visited detailed their efforts to ensure an accurate voter list. In most instances, the election commission chairman reviewed the list and then distributed it to other commissioners for their review. Lists were placed throughout the constituency for public review.

Overall, the conduct of the elections at the polling site level appeared to be well organized. There were, especially at the mid-part of the day, crowded polling stations with long lines to receive ballots and vote.

The violations witnessed in Kharkiv were administrative oversights and misinterpretations of the election law, not blatant manipulations. Most voting irregularities

occurred in the form of more than one person in a voting booth, voting outside of the voting booth and conversation and discussion between voters while completing their ballots.

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CEC election literature was available in all but one of the polling stations visited by IRI, although some stations, instead of displaying CEC posters on a wall, stacked them on a desk or bound them in a book. At the polling site where no CEC materials were available, the election commission chairman told IRI her mistaken belief that the posting of literature, even that from the CEC, was a violation of the election law. An example of illegal display of campaign material was witnessed at a polling station in the rural village of Polevaja at which a PDP poster was hanging alongside the CEC posters.

Eight domestic observers were present at the polling station where IRI observed its closing. Although the election commission was organized in the counting and tabulation process, there was no checking or verification of counts. Also, in the recording of votes, the number of voters plus the number of unused ballots did not equal the total number of ballots received from the CEC. It was never clear to the observers how this was corrected.

The only other irregularity observed during vote counting and tabulation was on the part of the commission chairman. She invalidated questionable ballots -- those with stray marks or incorrectly completed -- without consulting other election commissioners.

As of 5:30 a.m. on March 30, the commission had tallied the majoritarian and proportional ballots for the Verkhovna Rada. However, the polling station chairman refused to provide IRI with a copy of the minutes, nor would she sign an IRI transcribed copy of the results.

V. Post Election

IRI visited the constituency election commission at 3:30 p.m. on March 30 to observe post election activity and record the reported vote totals. However, after 10 hours, the polling station at which IRI observed vote counting and tabulation had not submitted its minutes.



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Kharkiv Oblast Exit Poll Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998 International Republican Institute

(Kharkiv - 6 Respondents: Results are unofficial, based only on the responses of interested voters after departing polling stations. Responses were gathered in a non-scientific method and are not intended to be statistically valid.)

1) The voting instructions were:

Easy to understand	83.3%
Somewhat complicated	0%
Very difficult to understand	16.6%

2) What source did you rely on most for political information for the election? (Pick one)

Television	50.0%
Radio	0%
Newspaper	16.6%
Posters, other literature	0%
Meeting the candidates	16.6%
Party/election bloc label	0%
Friend/relative or spouse	16.6%

3) Thinking about all the pre-election information you had, did you find that you:

Had more than enough information to main informed decision	ake 16.6%
Had about the right amount of information to make an informed decision	on 50.0%
Had not enough information to make	

an informed decision

4) What qualities were most important in the candidates and parties you supported?

33.3%

Someone I trust	16.6%
I agree with the policies advocated by the candidate/political party	66.6%
One who will work hard to make life better for people	16.6%

5) What do you think the top priority of the new Rada ought to be?

Political stability	0%
Economic reform	83.3%
Stopping corruption in government	33.3%
Reducing crime	16.6%
Ukrainian sovereignty	0%
Other	16.6%

6) Which best describes the impact of your vote?

My vote is important to Ukrainian	22.20/
democracy	33.3%
Voting helps determine Ukraine's future	33.3%

Elections are already determined by those in power	16.6%	
Nothing will change	33.3%	
7) What is your opinion about the mixed-election system?		
It will ensure that majority views are represented in the Rada	50.0%	
Should have only a proportional system	0%	
Should have only single-mandate system	16.6%	

8) Who would you like to see elected president in 1999?

16.6%

16.6%

President Leonid Kuchma 0%

Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 16.6%

National Security Advisor
Volodymyr Horbulin 0%

Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko 0%

Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk 0%

National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko 16.6%

Other 66.6%

9) Who is responsible for Ukraine's problems today? (Pick one)

President Leonid Kuchma 50.0%

Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 0%

National Security Advisor

It makes no difference

Don't understand the system

Volodymyr Horbulin	0%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	16.6%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	0%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	0%
Other	0%
10) Sex	
Male	83.3%
Female	16.6%
11) Member of a political party?	
Yes	0%
No	100%

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Kyiv Oblast Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998

I. Summary

IRI's observation team for the Kyiv oblast consisted of Ambassador William Taft IV, the delegation leader, and IRI staff members Tom Garrett, E.R. Gregory and Oksana Hasiuk.

Prior to Sunday's elections the team met with election officials and members of the government in Kyiv to assess activities surrounding the election. Meetings were held with officials of the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the Cabinet of Ministers.

On election day, the team observed balloting at nine polling stations. The randomly chosen schedule included stations at a prison facility, in rural areas and within the capital city. IRI's team witnessed large and consistent crowds. Each polling site also had good domestic pollwatcher representation.

No attempts to falsify balloting were observed. However, the team did witness numerous irregularities, including community voting, voting outside the voting booths and failure to post CEC mandated election materials in several sites.

II. Regional Profile

Kyiv oblast is located in north-central Ukraine. It is bordered by Belarus to the north, Chernihiv oblast to the east and Zhytomyr oblast to the west. The Dnipro River divides the oblast's wooded terrain between east and west. Kyiv oblast covers a territory of 28,400 square kilometers and is divided into 25 territorial administrative districts, 10 cities, 15 district centers, 30 towns and 1,218 villages.

Kyiv oblast is one of the most developed industrial and agricultural centers in Ukraine. A combination of various kinds of industry contributes most to the oblast's gross production figures with agriculture running a close second. Construction, transportation and communications are also important economic sectors in the oblast. Kyiv's exports include tires, sugar, paper and cardboard, gas equipment, power shovels and furniture. The oblast imports goods such as raw materials for manufacturing tires, machines, ferrous metals and fuel.

The basis of the industrial potential of the oblast consists of 339 large and medium enterprises, plus more than 200 subsidiaries. A few of the larger enterprises include Chornobyl Atomic Power Station, Trypillia Electric Power Station, Brovary factories manufacturing powder metallurgy products and plastics and Chervonyi Zhovten paper and carton factory in Obukhiv city. One of Coca-Cola's largest plants in Europe in located in the oblast.

Kyiv oblast is also developed agriculturally with 502 collective farms, 118 state farms and 172 privately-owned farms. Arable land covers about 84 percent of the oblast. The main crops are grain and vegetables. Kyiv oblast leads Ukraine in meat and dairy production.

The political atmosphere in Kyiv city, similar to that of many national capitals, does not resemble that of any other region of the country. National politics, for the most part, are the primary issues of debate.

III. Regional Briefings

IRI met with CEC Chairman Mykhailo Riabets and Prime Minister Valeriy Pustovoytenko prior to election day. These meetings yielded a greater understanding of the administration's election preparations.

The meeting with Mr. Riabets focused primarily on national election issues. He assured IRI that Ukraine was fully prepared for the elections.

Ambassador Taft and IRI staff joined members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Swedish Conservative Party and the Ukrainian American Congress in a meeting with Prime Minister Pustovoytenko. Ukrainian media were invited for the opening portion of the meeting, in which the Prime Minister spoke of his hopes for a strong showing of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Media were escorted from the room before observers were allowed to speak.

As senior observer present, Ambassador Taft led the remarks, asking Prime Minister Pustovoytenko to comment on abuse of government resources on behalf of the PDP. Mr. Pustovoytenko denied such abuse had occurred but said certain factions within the Verkhovna Rada had indeed abused the parliament's media organ, Holos Ukrainy, for campaign purposes. Ambassador Taft also asked the Prime Minister what course he would select if elected deputy. Mr. Pustovoytenko responded he would resign his proportional ballot seat and remain as Prime Minister, noting that other Cabinet members would probably do the opposite.

Saturday evening, at an event sponsored by Eastern Economist Magazine, Ambassador Taft spoke with OSCE Ambassador Michael Weygand. Various issues surrounding the vote were discussed.

IV. Election Day

IRI's Kyiv deployment team proceeded to nine polling stations throughout Kyiv oblast on election day. Without exception, the team found good domestic pollwatcher representation in each site. Overall, there were large and consistent crowds of voters and few problems to report.

However, each of the sites that IRI observed had similar irregularities. Community voting and voting outside of polling booths were prevalent. Several sites also failed to post non-partisan candidate information, which the CEC was to have issued to them.

During the observation, the team visited a station located at a local prison. Some 3,500 inmates were eligible to vote. No women inmates were observed voting as prison election officials were not yet prepared to conduct balloting for them. The men's block had heavy voting during the team visit.

A single Rukh pollwatcher was present during IRI's visit. The young woman was kept within a holding area of the administration building and told she might go to the polling site as she wished, escorted by prison guards. Her visit was in IRI's presence, and she did not seem inclined to repeat it alone.

The polling site at which the IRI team observed the close of balloting had been fairly disorganized, in no small part through poor design. Candidate posters were on a separate floor from the polling site, behind a roped off stairwell and a locked door. Lines during the day were long, causing people to complete ballots in the open. Several small children were seen carrying ballots. At least one person was observed exiting the polling station with an unmarked ballot.

However, the vote count was without irregularities. All 10 of the domestic pollwatchers were present for tabulation. The IRI team remained at the site for the tabulation of the Verkhovna Rada ballots.

V. Post Election

At 10 a.m. the day following the elections, Ambassador Taft released a statement announcing IRI's preliminary election observations.



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Kyiv Oblast Exit Poll Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998 International Republican Institute

(Kyiv - 26 Respondents: Results are unofficial, based only on the responses of interested voters after departing polling stations. Responses were gathered in a non-scientific method and are not intended to be statistically valid.)

1) The voting instructions were:

Easy to understand	88.4%
Somewhat complicated	7.7%
Very difficult to understand	3.8%

2) What source did you rely on most for political information for the election? (Pick one)

Television	50.0%
Radio	19.2%
Newspaper	11.5%
Posters, other literature	7.7%
Meeting the candidates	3.8%
Party/election bloc label	3.8%
Friend/relative or spouse	3.8%

3) Thinking about all the pre-election information you had, did you find that you:

Had more than enough information to make an informed decision	30.7%
Had about the right amount of information to make an informed decision	41.1%
Had not enough information to make an informed decision	23.1%

4) What qualities were most important in the candidates and parties you supported?

Someone I trust	19.2%
I agree with the policies advocated by the candidate/political party	38.4%
One who will work hard to make life better for people	34.6%

5) What do you think the top priority of the new Rada ought to be?

Political stability	30.7%
Economic reform	65.3%
Stopping corruption in government	34.6%
Reducing crime	26.9%
Ukrainian sovereignty	30.7%
Other	11.5%

6) Which best describes the impact of your vote?

My vote is important to Ukrainian democracy	26.9%
Voting helps determine Ukraine's future	57.6%

Elections are already determined by those in power	11.5%
Nothing will change	3.8%

7) What is your opinion about the mixed-election system?

It will ensure that majority views are represented in the Rada	42.3%
Should have only a proportional system	15.3%
Should have only single-mandate system	19.2%
It makes no difference	0%
Don't understand the system	19.2%

8) Who would you like to see elected president in 1999?

President Leonid Kuchma	7.7%
Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz	19.2%
National Security Advisor Volodymyr Horbulin	3.8%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	3.8%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	7.7%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	11.5%
Other	41.1%

9) Who is responsible for Ukraine's problems today? (Pick one)

President Leonid Kuchma 42.3%

Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 7.7%

National Security Advisor

	Volodymyr Horbulin	3.8%
	Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	0%
	Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	0%
	National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	0%
	Other	34.6%
	10) Sex	
	Male	42.3%
	Female	50.0%
Υ.,	11) Member of a political party?	
	Yes	11.5%
	No .	80.7%

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Odesa Oblast Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998

I. Summary

IRI deployed two teams to observe the Verkhovna Rada elections in Odesa oblast. Team #1 included delegate Judge Bohdan Futey and IRI staff member David Denehy. Delegate Howard Denis and IRI staff member Daniel Calingaert comprised Team #2.

After attending meetings in Kyiv, the teams traveled to Odesa and observed pre-election activity. IRI held meetings with political party leaders, constituency election officials and local media representatives. These meetings yielded a greater understanding of the pre-election activity in the oblast.

On election day, IRI observed balloting at 26 polling sites. The teams witnessed the opening of two polling stations and proceeded separately throughout the day. IRI found voter turnout to be high in almost every station visited. IRI delegates received reports of voter intimidation in the campaign and manipulation of votes by soldiers and observed irregularities in the vote count.

Odesa's race for mayor overshadowed the elections for the Verkhovna Rada. The mayoral campaign was tense and heated with reported threats of violence and attempts to remove the mayor's name from the ballot.

II. Regional Profile

Odesa oblast lies in southern Ukraine on the shores of the Black Sea. This seaside location provides the region with a strategic economic link to Eastern and Central Europe. Vinnytsia and Kirovograd oblasts lie to the north of Odesa; Mykolaiv oblast lies to the east and Moldova lies to the west.

Administratively, the oblast is divided into 26 agricultural districts, 18 cities, 12 municipalities, 33 villages and 1,143 rural areas. The region has one of the most diverse populations in Ukraine. The population of approximately 2.6 million is made up of Ukrainians, Russians, Bulgarians, Moldovans, Belarusians, Poles, Armenians, Gypsies, Tatars, Germans and Czechs.

The Black Sea coast is one of the leading factors in the national economy. Shipping companies service more than 10 international lines and connect to more than 600 ports around the world. Each port in the oblast is designed to specialize in handling specific imports and exports. For example the port city of Odesa primarily handles food shipments, refrigerated cargo and various kinds of equipment. In contrast, the port city of Bilghorod-Dnistrovskyi primarily handles timber. Odesa's ports are connected to regular transport lines within the region. The Black Sea also provides for tourism. Many resorts occupy the region's 175 miles of beach. Curative muds and minerals are regional natural recreational resources and are used to treat various ailments.

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Leftist parties are strong in Odesa oblast. The Communist Party as well as the Socialist Party of Ukraine each have large membership rolls. Among the centrist parties, Rukh and the Constitutional Democratic Party, part of the SLOn electoral bloc, are popular. The center-left Spiritual, Economic and Social Progress Party, formed in 1994, also has a strong base.

III. Regional Briefings

Upon arrival in Odesa, IRI met with representatives from Rukh and the Socialist Party; members of the National Front's youth organization; commissioners from both the city and oblast election commissions; and representatives from the media, including television, radio and newspaper.

Each of the party representatives told IRI that they were given limited access to the media. They all faced the common problem of limited party funding in the regions. However, they all had leaflets issued by their party headquarters in Kyiv to distribute. They found that individualized campaign efforts such as door-to-door techniques were very effective.

The preparations for administering the election, which the team observed on a visit to the oblast election commission, were less than inspiring: the oblast election commission was mostly inactive on the eve of elections; the commissioners, when asked, were unaware of how many registered voters there were in the oblast; and the commission had, by mistake, left the name of one registered candidate, Natalia Kruglikova, off the ballot. When confronted with that mistake, the commission instructed polling stations to write Ms. Kruglikova's name on each ballot by hand, though several polling stations never received or carried out that instruction.

IRI found in its pre-election briefings with party leaders, election officials and local media representatives that most of the attention in Odesa was focused on the race for mayor, which became very tense in its final weeks. Aside from a few publications that avoided politics, all newspapers, magazines and TV stations were openly supporting either the incumbent Hurvits or the challenger Ruslan Bodelan. Any discussion of substantive issues had given way to non-stop accusations of corruption thrown by each candidate at the other. Furthermore, a series of

events had created an atmosphere of intimidation: the main pro-Hurvits TV station, ART, was taken off the air; the first deputy mayor was arrested; the head of the mayor's legal department disappeared; bomb threats were made at three polling stations; and legal action was taken to remove Hurvits name from the ballot.

A raion court ordered the Odesa city election commission to strike Hurvits' name from the ballot. On appeal, one of the judges on the oblast court reversed the raion court's decision on the day before the election and reinstated Hurvits' name on the ballot. However, the chief judge of the oblast court then reinstated the raion court's decision. The city election commission told local polling station commissions directly to keep Hurvits' name on the ballot. At 8 p.m. the night before the election, the city election commission called a meeting for polling station commissions to stress that polling stations, according to the election law, were required to follow directions of the election commission. Additionally, the Central Election Commission had not informed the city election commission to remove any names from the ballot. About 1,000 election commissioners attended the meeting. Commissioners from other polling stations were contacted by the city election commission on the morning of election day, before the polls opened, to confirm that Hurvits' name should appear on the ballot.

Voters came to the polls in large numbers and reelected Hurvits mayor of Odesa.

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IV. Election Day

The IRI teams witnessed the opening of two polling stations on election day. While neither site was prepared for voters at the beginning of the election, commissioners at both sites opened voting promptly at 7 a.m. However, one site was still sealing a few ballot boxes at that time. The other site was missing information on candidates and received several packs of incorrect ballots from the commission.

With the exception of voting by soldiers, no organized or deliberate attempts to violate the election law were observed. Plenty of domestic observers, representing a variety of parties and candidates, were present at each polling station. They occasionally saw small procedural mistakes, which were usually immediately corrected, but reported no significant violations.

Voters in the city of Odesa received five separate ballots. Many voters, at some stations up to half of all voters, seemed confused by the ballot choices and asked for guidance on voting procedures from election commissioners. The length of time required to fill out five ballots and the high voter turnout made polling stations crowded. By late morning, voters had to wait in long lines to reach a voting booth. While voters were waiting in line, they frequently discussed their ballots with their family or neighbors and marked their ballots. Voting outside the booths was pervasive.

In the village of Fontanka, two polling stations combined to form one large polling

station. This consolidation resulted in 4,000 registered voters -- the limit in the election law was 3,000 voters -- casting ballots at one site. The result was overall confusion, poor ballot security and open voting.

The only serious violation reported to IRI on election day involved voting by the military. Soldiers from a nearby base voted in the village of Oktyabr. A domestic observer at the village polling station reported that army officers instructed soldiers to vote for specific candidates. These soldiers, she explained, entered the polling station with the names of candidates written on their hands. The observer had filed a complaint with the local polling station commission, and when that complaint was ignored, had informed the raion election commission of the alleged violation. A member of the raion election commission was present during our visit. That commissioner was less interested in responding to the observer's allegations than in preventing IRI from speaking to anyone inside the polling station.

Pollwatchers representing a number of parties and candidates were present at each station. They seemed to have little training and were seemingly unfamiliar with the election law.

Irregularities were observed in the vote count. At the polling station team #2 observed, the election commission deviated in several ways from proper vote count procedures. The commission counted the number of unused ballots first but neglected to immediately announce that number. When asked, the commission chairman refused to reveal the total number of ballots received, unused ballots and people who had voted. Those numbers were only released at the end of the entire vote count, when the polling station's minutes were completed.

In the count for the Verkhovna Rada elections, the commission divided ballots into separate piles for each party or candidate. Election commissioners took one pile at a time, counted it, then wrapped and sealed it immediately. Ballots thus were sealed before the commission had counted the total number of votes for all parties or candidates, i.e. before the commission could find out whether the numbers were in balance.

In fact, the number of votes for all candidates did <u>not</u> add up to the total number of ballots used. When the election commissioners discovered this discrepancy, they had already sealed all of the ballot papers. They changed the figures on the minutes to make the numbers add up. Most of the commissioners signed the minutes and went home before the numbers from the vote count were listed on the voting record.

The election commissioners, by all indications, tried to change the figures in the minutes not to alter the election results but to finish the vote count as quickly as possible. After a long day at the polls, commissioners counted ballots from 10 p.m. until 8 a.m. the following morning. IRI observed vote tabulation throughout the night.

Team #1 also observed a rather chaotic station as it closed the polls and counted ballots. The team observed the presence of alcohol in an adjacent room and the constant visits to it by

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pollworkers and some domestic observers. Adding to the confusion was a large number of people who were neither commissioners nor observers who remained at the station after it closed.

Several commissioners at this polling station left before the counting procedure was completed. Poll workers signed blank minutes, which were later completed by the chairman and secretary of the polling station. No official vote record was posted for public display. Team #1 remained at the polling station throughout the night and observed the vote tabulation. The team followed election commissioners the following morning as they dropped off the sealed ballots at the constituency election commission.

V. Post Election

IRI visited a constituency election commission in mid-afternoon the day after the elections. At that time, most of the polling stations had reported final tabulations.



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Odesa Oblast Exit Poll Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998 International Republican Institute

(Odesa - 24 Respondents: Results are unofficial, based only on the responses of interested voters after departing polling stations. Responses were gathered in a non-scientific method and are not intended to be statistically valid.)

1) The voting instructions were:

Easy to understand 73.9%

Somewhat complicated 26.1%

Very difficult to understand 0%

2) What source did you rely on most for political information for the election? (Pick one)

Television	34.3%
Radio	9.4%
Newspaper	18.8%
Posters, other literature	0%
Meeting the candidates	15.6%
Party/election bloc label	12.5%
Friend/relative or spouse	9.4%

3) Thinking about all the pre-election information you had, did you find that you:

Had more than enough information to make an informed decision 39.1%

Had about the right amount of information

to make an informed decision 34.8%

Had not enough information to make an informed decision

26.1%

4) What qualities were most important in the candidates and parties you supported?

Someone I trust 26.1%

I agree with the policies advocated by

the candidate/political party 43.5%

One who will work hard to make

life better for people 30.4%

5) What do you think the top priority of the new Rada ought to be?

Political stability 16.3%

Economic reform 32.6%

Stopping corruption in government 23.3%

Reducing crime 13.9%

Ukrainian sovereignty 9.3%

Other 4.6%

6) Which best describes the impact of your vote?

My vote is important to Ukrainian

democracy 20.8%

Voting helps determine Ukraine's future 50.0%

Elections are already determined by	
those in power	20.8%
Nothing will change	8.3%

7) What is your opinion about the mixed-election system?

It will ensure that majority views are represented in the Rada	45.8%
•	
Should have only a proportional system	12.5%
Should have only single-mandate system	12.5%
It makes no difference	8.3%
Don't understand the system	20.8%

8) Who would you like to see elected president in 1999?

President Leonid Kuchma	17.4%
Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz	8.7%
National Security Advisor Volodymyr Horbulin	0%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	0%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	8.7%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	8.7%
Other	56.5%

9) Who is responsible for Ukraine's problems today? (Pick one)

President Leonid Kuchma	60.0%
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Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 12.0%

National Security Advisor

Volodymyr Horbulin	0%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	8.0%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	0%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	0%
Other	20.0%
10) Sex	
Male	75.0 %
Female	25.0%
11) Member of a political party?	
Yes	9.5%
No .	90.5%

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Ternopil Oblast Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998

I. Summary

IRI deployed delegate Chad Kolton and IRI staff member Mike Magan to Ternopil oblast to observe the Verkhovna Rada elections. The deployment team arrived the day before the elections and held meetings with the editor in chief of *Ternopil Evening*, a polling station election commission chairman, several members of a local election commission and political party leaders. These meetings yielded, among other issues, a level of concern about the limited resources available to local election commissions and pollworkers' level of knowledge about their duties.

The Ternopil oblast team observed balloting at 16 polling stations, approximately half in rural regions and the remaining in Ternopil city. Overall, the team witnessed high voter turnout, organized polling stations and election commissioners dedicated to their responsibilities. No systematic violations of the election law were observed, although irregularities occurred at many voting sites, some of which could be directly attributed to the election commissioners' lack of procedural knowledge (especially during the vote count).

The most common irregularity was the practice of "community voting" as family members and/or friends voted anywhere they could find a place or together in a ballot booth that was designed to allow secret voting. Some polling locations were too small to accommodate the number of voters within that election district.

II. Regional Profile

The Ternopil oblast occupies about 14,000 square kilometers of the forest-steppe zone of western Ukraine. Rivne oblast borders it to the north, Khmelnitskiy oblast borders it to the east, Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi oblasts border it to the south and Lviv oblast borders it to the west. The region is divided into 17 administrative districts, including 19 cities, 16 towns and 1,016 villages.

Land resources are the main wealth of Ternopil oblast. Agricultural land constitutes nearly 76 percent of land use. The black and gray soils that prevail in the oblast comprise one of

the most fertile areas in the world. Forests occupy about 13 percent of the region's land; the rest is used for recreational purposes. The land yields Ukraine's largest harvest of wild berries, fruits, birch sap and herbs. Its natural resources consist mainly of important minerals for construction purposes. Limestone, quartz sand, brick-tile clay and gravel are all mined for the construction industry.

Ternopil's industrial production is formed by 444 state enterprises, 128 joint-stock companies, 1,422 small enterprises, 582 agricultural enterprises and 733 peasant farms. The state no longer owns a majority of these properties. About 16 percent of industrial enterprises, 41 percent of trade and public catering establishments and 26 percent of everyday repairs and other services have been privatized. The food, machine-building and light industries make up more than 80 percent of the total volume of the region's production.

Because of its location in western Ukraine, residents of Ternopil oblasts typically follow more closely the events of western Europe, not Russia and other portions of the former Soviet Union as do citizens in eastern Ukraine. Voters in this region are generally more nationalistic and more supportive of free-market economics and democracy than their eastern counterparts.

Living standards in Ternopil, like other areas in western Ukraine, are higher than those in the industrial east. Ukrainian sovereignty and nationalistic themes often dominate the political debate rather than "pocketbook issues." Not surprisingly, leftist parties find very little support in the oblast.

The Christian Democratic Party of Ukraine (CDPU) is one of the dominant political parties. Rukh, the Republican Christian Party of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Republican Party and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists are also very strong democratic parties.

III. Regional Briefings

On Saturday, March 28, IRI's observation team met with the editor of the largest circulation newspaper in the oblast, various political party representatives, the president of a polling station and several members of the oblast election commission. These meetings provided valuable insight on the conduct of the regional campaign and the many issues affecting voter attitudes and the efficiency of election administration.

The team held meetings with Alexander Verchinsky, the editor in chief of *Vilne Zhyttya* (*Free Life*); Ivan Havdyda from the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists; Mikhaila Hutor from the Christian Democratic party; Mikhaila Vasiljic from the Democratic Party Union; Anatoly Yatischuk, the chairman of polling station #43; and several members of a polling station election commission.

The political party representatives expressed several common concerns about the

following day's vote, the foremost being the potential for technical and procedural problems on election day. They were concerned that there could be voter interference on the part of oblast administration officials, who were said to be vulnerable to bribery or outside pressure. Also, many expressed concern of possible violations during the counting process.

The political party leaders with whom IRI met all seemed satisfied with the way their prospective campaigns had gone and were looking forward to election day. When asked if they would be fielding party pollwatchers, all said yes and expected to have near complete coverage of the oblast's polling sites. Regarding the news media, they were generally pleased, although they believed some of political parties received better advertising deals and candidate coverage than other parties.

The IRI team was impressed with the extensive coverage by *Ternopil Evening*, the newspaper of the Ternopil city council, of political issues and voter education materials. *Ternopil Evening*, as part of its election coverage, published voting instructions, political party platforms, answers to questions submitted by readers, opinion articles and candidate views on specific issues.

During political party meetings, IRI was told of a problem at a local polling station (#43) where unofficial ballots had been distributed. The team went to the polling station to verify the case and met with Anatoly Yatischuk, the chairman of the polling station. He confirmed for IRI that incorrect or unofficial ballots had been delivered. He then showed the team where he had locked them and confirmed that he was waiting for representatives from the election commission to replace those ballots. He then showed the team how he was preparing for the elections the next day.

As a result, IRI went to visit the chairman of the oblast election commission. The election commission was aware of the invalid ballots but was having a problem deciding how to dispose of them, while staying within the laws that guided them. The commission chairman also stated that inadequate funding from the Central Election Commission (CEC) delayed and limited such activities as voter education and caused late delivery of ballots.

IV. Election Day

Election day began with the team arriving at a polling station before its official opening. The voting site opened exactly at 7 a.m. with the playing of Ukraine's national anthem on loudspeakers. A group of elderly people were waiting when the station opened. Voting instructions and candidate posters produced by the CEC were posted in a room adjacent to the larger area where actual voting was done. Ballot boxes were properly sealed and in full view of voters and election commissioners. There were no signs of fraud or vote tampering.

After observing the opening of this polling station, the IRI team traveled to rural areas

bordering Ternopil city and randomly selected voting sites for the remainder of election day. In the morning hours, voting was conducted in an orderly fashion with relatively low numbers of voters at polling stations. However, as church congregations dispersed later in the day, heavy voter turnout resulted in numerous polling stations with long lines of voters.

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Generally, IRI found polling stations throughout the oblast to be well-organized and adequately arranged. There were, however, notable exceptions as well as various irregularities that were common to almost every polling station IRI visited. Also, there was extensive confusion on how to vote, mostly a result of voters receiving six ballots.

The most consistent irregularity was the prevalence of "community voting." Although booths that allowed private voting were available at each polling station, the team found groups of two or more voters entering booths together and discussing their ballot choices. In addition, many voters, unwilling to wait in line for an available booth, publicly marked their ballots outside the booths.

A lack of ballot security was also noted at many polling stations. Stacks of unused ballots were placed on the floor, on tables and other places easily accessible to anyone in the vicinity. Only in one or two places did the polling station chairman keep unused ballots in a private location.

In a few polling stations, IRI found campaign literature either in the information room or posted outside of the polling station. At several polling stations the team visited, the issue of mobile ballot boxes was interpreted in different ways. Many pollworkers felt that no one should be denied the right to vote and, as a result, disregarded the list of voters who had applied for the mobile ballot box service. In violation of the election law, these commissioners added any voter on the mobile ballot box list who requested it, either in writing or verbally, regardless of the passage of the application deadline.

Throughout the elections, the team noted the absence of political party pollwatchers. In many places, despite what IRI had been told the previous day by political party leaders, no party pollwatchers were present. Of the polling stations in Ternopil city where IRI observed, only one had a defined area for pollwatchers. At this location, pollwatchers were complaining that they were being kept too far away to adequately observe the voting process.

The IRI team arrived at its final polling station prior to its closing for vote counting and tabulation. At this station, IRI found election commissioners to be inadequately informed on proper counting procedures. Commissioners did not count the unused ballots versus used ballots prior to vote tabulation and subsequently discovered that the total number of used ballots did not equal the number of ballots cast. Election commissioners also mixed ballots from the mobile ballot with other ballots, rather than count them separately as stipulated in the election law.

However, it should be noted that the commissioners did not act in a partisan manner and

were certainly dedicated to completing the process. There were party pollwatchers present at the closing and for the count; however, the majority of them were not familiar with correct tabulation procedures and had little to no training.

The IRI team observed vote tabulation until 8 a.m. the day after elections. Tabulation was complete for all races except for that of oblast rada.

V. Post-Election

IRI visited the Ternopil election commission on Monday at 3 p.m, following the elections. The area was very well organized, and the IRI team was told by the commission that 86 percent of polling stations had reported. The team asked for minutes from various polling stations within the commission's jurisdiction but were told that they were not yet available. The IRI team was also told that many polling stations had difficulty in tabulating the results in the election for oblast rada.



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Ternopil Oblast Exit Poll Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998 International Republican Institute

(Ternopil - 75 Respondents: Results are unofficial, based only on the responses of interested voters after departing polling stations. Responses were gathered in a non-scientific method and are not intended to be statistically valid.)

1) The voting instructions were:

Easy to understand 78.6%

Somewhat complicated 16.0%

Very difficult to understand 2.6%

2) What source did you rely on most for political information for the election? (Pick one)

Television	57.3%
Radio	4.0%
Newspaper	9.3%
Posters, other literature	4.0%
Meeting the candidates	16.0%
Party/election bloc label	0%
Friend/relative or spouse	4.0%

3) Thinking about all the pre-election information you had, did you find that you:

Had more than enough information to make	
an informed decision	21.3%

Had about the right amount of information to make an informed decision

60.0%

Had not enough information to make an informed decision

17.3%

4) What qualities were most important in the candidates and parties you supported?

Someone I trust				20.0%
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I agree with the policies advocated by the candidate/political party 37.3%

One who will work hard to make life better for people 40.0%

5) What do you think the top priority of the new Rada ought to be?

Political stability	21.3%
Economic reform	60.0%
Stopping corruption in government	42.6%
Reducing crime	18.6%
Ukrainian sovereignty	26.6%
Other	4.0%

6) Which best describes the impact of your vote?

My vote is important to Ukrainian democracy	26.6%
Voting helps determine Ukraine's future	58.6%

Elections are already determined by	
those in power	6.6%
Nothing will change	9.3%

7) What is your opinion about the mixed-election system?

It will ensure that majority views are represented in the Rada	56.0%
Should have only a proportional system	10.6%
Should have only single-mandate system	2.6%
It makes no difference	9.3%
Don't understand the system	18.6%

8) Who would you like to see elected president in 1999?

President Leonid Kuchma	14.6%
Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz	2.6%
National Security Advisor Volodymyr Horbulin	5.3%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	2.6%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	4.0%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	30.6%
Other	38.6%

9) Who is responsible for Ukraine's problems today? (Pick one)

President Leonid Kuchma 52.0%

Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 20.0%

National Security Advisor

Volodymyr Horbulin	2.6%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	5.3%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	0%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	0%
Other	13.3%
10) Sex	
Male	44.0%
Female	53.3%
11) Member of a political party?	
Yes	14.6%
No	85.3%

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Zhytomyr Oblast Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998

I. Summary

IRI deployed two observation teams to Zhytomyr oblast for the Verkhovna Rada elections. Team #1 consisted of delegate Dr. Arnold Beichman and IRI staff member Vadim Naumov; team #2 consisted of delegate Diana Denman and IRI staff member Barbara Broomell.

The Zhytomyr teams arrived Friday evening prior to Sunday's elections and held meetings with representatives from local media, political parties and a constituency election commission. Concerns expressed during these meetings included limited access to the media by political parties and candidates, limited representation of political parties on the election commission and voter confusion resulting from the new election law. Political party representatives also expressed concern that violations during the 1994 parliamentary election, such as falsification of ballots, would be repeated.

The Zhytomyr teams observed balloting at 21 polling stations. The teams witnessed the opening of two stations and proceeded to separate sites throughout the morning. In the afternoon, the teams met to observe balloting at a local prison and proceeded to rural polling sites together. The teams separated again in the evening to observe balloting around Zhytomyr city and witness vote tabulation at two polling sites.

While the Zhytomyr delegation found the polling conditions to be rather chaotic, no serious attempts to falsify the balloting process were observed. The irregularities noted stemmed from polling station disorganization, lack of effort by commissioners to enforce election law provisions and confusion on behalf of the voters.

II. Regional Profile

The Zhytomyr oblast is located in north-central Ukraine. It is bordered by Belarus to the north, Kyiv oblast to the east, Rivne and Khmelnytskiy oblasts to the west and Vinnytsia oblast to the south. Due to its geographic location and adequate transportation network, Zhytomyr oblast is a key connection between its neighboring Ukrainian oblasts and Eastern and Central Europe.

Natural resources, such as deposits of semiprecious stones and raw mineral materials, make up a significant proportion of Zhytomyr's economy. It is also rich in limestone and construction minerals. The region has a large deposit of marble, which can be used for facing stone, and produces magnesium oxide and different types of fertilizers.

Zhytomyr's major industries include machine building and machine tools factories. They produce metal and woodworking machinery as well as measuring units and machinery for the chemical, agricultural, forestry and construction industries. More than 40 percent of the 11.5 thousand enterprises registered in this region are now in private ownership.

Politically, parties of the left and center are more popular in this predominantly rural oblast. Most of the reform-oriented parties are centralized in Zhytomyr city, having little organization in the rural areas. The Agrarian Party of Ukraine and the Social-Democratic Party (United) each claim membership of more than 10,000 voters in the oblast. Other parties such as the Liberal Party of Ukraine, Rukh and the Communist Party of Ukraine also have strong support.

III. Regional briefings

IRI's Zhytomyr teams met with the editor of a local newspaper, several political party representatives and the chairman of a local constituency election commission prior to Sunday's elections. These meetings gave the teams a clearer understanding of campaign and voting issues in the region.

The team's first meeting occurred Friday evening, by flashlight due to a power outage, in the offices of the city newspaper, *Misto*, with editor Sergei Yukimchuk. *Misto* claims a weekly circulation of approximately 20,000 readers. One-third of the newspaper's finances are provided by the Zhytomyr City Council, and its remaining revenue is generated through subscriptions and advertisements. Yukimchuk displayed issues of the newspaper, which he said offer fair and equal election coverage.

The IRI teams also met with Svatoslav Vasilchuk, who is oblast chairman of Rukh, editor of Rukh's newspaper "Viche" and a candidate for Verkhovna Rada; Vladimir Boiko, Rukh's candidate for mayor of Zhytomyr city; Yuri Osibchuk, campaign manager and executive board member of Rukh; Vyacheslav Dekhtyevskyi, oblast chairman of the Democratic Party of Ukraine; Valerii Chudovski, oblast chairman of the Liberal Party of Ukraine; and Dmitri Kovtun, the Liberal Party of Ukraine's candidate for city council.

Each of these individuals expressed concern regarding the lack of voter education efforts. Given the late passage of the election law, party representatives believed that the majority of voters were not adequately informed about election procedures, especially the multi-ballot

voting. These party representatives were also concerned that polling station election commissioners would not help voters who were confused with the process on election day.

Instances of voter intimidation also concerned party representatives. Collective farm operators reportedly warned voters in their districts that they must vote for the candidate supported by the operator. If they refused, farm operators threatened to withhold basic provisions rationed out to workers. Party representatives stated that such intimidation occurred not only in collective farm meetings but also in door-to-door campaigns.

The political parties with which IRI met experienced the common obstacle of limited supplies and resources for campaigning. Most of the parties did not advertise in the local media due to its cost. Some parties, however, received donations of paper and printed materials from local businesses. Door-to-door campaigning was the most often used campaign technique.

Party representatives also found the balance of election officials on the local election commissions unfair. According to these party leaders, the majority of local election commissioners were identified with the current oblast administration.

IRI met with the Vyacheslav Yanshevskyi, chairman of constituency election commission #69. Mr Yanshevskyi also worked on the local commission in the 1994 elections. As with the local party officials, Mr. Yanshevskyi expressed concern regarding voter confusion on election day. He predicted that despite attempts to publicize election information in local media, approximately 20 - 30 percent of voters would not understand the balloting process.

Mr. Yanshevskyi stated there were no problems regarding ballot security. Ballots from the CEC arrived at the constituency election commission on March 25.

The IRI teams ended their meetings with a visit to a local polling station to observe preparations for election day. When the teams arrived, local officials were busy stamping the ballots and securing them in a safe. They had already posted CEC voter information and arranged ballot distribution tables and voting booths.

IV. Election day

The two IRI teams observed the opening of different polling stations on election day. Both stations were generally well-organized. Voter education materials from the CEC were properly displayed at both stations. Voters were given six ballots: single- and multi-mandate ballots for the Verkhovna Rada; and ballots for oblast rada, city rada, district rada and mayor.

Team #1 observed election commissioners seal ballot boxes and open the polling station promptly at 7 am. Pollwatchers from the Committee of Voters of Ukraine, the People's Democratic Party and representatives from five independent candidates were present for the

opening. Of the 15 election officials present, four were identified with political parties or blocs: the Socialist Party, the Liberal Party of Ukraine, the Communist Party of Ukraine and Rukh. This particular polling station used plywood ballot boxes from the last election instead of the cardboard ones issued in 1998 by the CEC. The polling station chairman explained that commissioners agreed to use the plywood boxes because they were much stronger and more secure.

The opening of the polling station observed by Team #2 also commenced at 7 a.m. Pollwatchers representing Rukh, the Communist Party of Ukraine, the People's Democratic Party of Ukraine and independent candidate Alex Dekhtyarenko were present. A pollwatcher representing Yuriy Yekhanurov, an independent candidate, was also present. At this site, IRI observers witnessed a young person arrive at the polling station with a stack of ballot control checks. The youth attempted to give the control checks to election commissioners but was turned away.

Teams #1 and #2 then continued to travel separately throughout the morning before meeting at a local prison to observe balloting. At the prison facility, prisoners were only given party list ballots for the Verkhovna Rada, as most were voters from other oblasts. Voting at this station commenced in an orderly fashion. The polling station election chairman told IRI that the voters were well informed on the procedures and the choice of candidates.

Throughout the day, the IRI teams witnessed several irregularities during balloting. Most of these were caused by a lack of organization at the site rather than a deliberate intention to falsify election results. "Community voting" in voting booths and voting outside the booths were the most common irregularities, both of which were primarily generated by an insufficient number of voting booths.

IRI observers also witnessed several commissioners allowing people without identification to vote. Only a few voters without proper identification were turned away, others were given ballots.

Partisan pollwatchers were present at each station observed by the IRI teams. In most instances, pollwatchers were seated in a specified area, often without full view of the voting booths and ballot boxes. When asked about their observations, no negative comments were made, even when irregularities were evident.

Voting irregularities were more common in rural areas. For example, in the village of Tetrevka, the chairman of the village council who was running for re-election was present at the voting booths, helping voters who did not understand the ballot process. IRI observers brought the situation to the attention of the polling station chairman, who explained that she unsuccessfully attempted to have the candidate removed from the station. Also, campaign literature was present in a polling station in Dryhliv. This same station had CEC-issued party platform descriptions of two political parties placed inside a voting booth.

Team #1 observed the closing of a polling station located at a military court. Voting prior to closing occurred in routine fashion and no infractions of the election law were noted during the counting and tabulation processes. The chairman of this polling station, a military lawyer and Communist Party member, openly stated his political affiliation to election commissioners and pollwatchers. In the proportional balloting for the Verkhovna Rada, the Communist Party candidate won overwhelmingly.

Team #2's final polling station was located in a school in Zhytomyr city. The station was somewhat chaotic as many students as well as other voters lingered in the halls after voting. In addition, the station was not organized so that election commissioners and pollwatchers could easily view the voting booths and ballot boxes. After the last vote was cast, a child came through and deposited another ballot.

Not all election officials were present when the polling station closed at 10 p.m. Five of the officials had gone to their respective polling stations to vote. Pollwatchers representing the Communist Party of Ukraine, Rukh, Hromada, Social Democratic Party of Ukraine, the Liberal Party of Ukraine and others representing independent candidates were all present at the close of the station and remained through most of the vote count.

The count began with the election chairman reading the regulations for the process. They proceeded to count the control checks, ballots and ballots from the mobile box. Ballots containing extraneous marks were inconsistently marked as invalid. Voter turnout at this polling station was 76 percent. Tabulation was completed at approximately 9 a.m. the following day, at which time the IRI team accompanied election officials as they delivered the sealed ballots and minutes, or record of vote totals, to the next level of election administration.

V. Post-Election

IRI visited constituency election commission #69 at 3:30 p.m. on March 30. At that time, 90 polling stations had reported and seven were still outstanding. Estimated voter turnout for the constituency was 70 percent.



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Zhytomyr Oblast Exit Poll Verkhovna Rada Elections - March 29, 1998 International Republican Institute

(Zhytomyr - 52 Respondents: Results are unofficial, based only on the responses of interested voters after departing polling stations. Responses were gathered in a non-scientific method and are not intended to be statistically valid.)

1) The voting instructions were:

Easy to understand	67.3%
Somewhat complicated	23.1%
Very difficult to understand	9.6%

2) What source did you rely on most for political information for the election? (Pick one)

Television	46.1%
Radio	17.3%
Newspaper	13.4%
Posters, other literature	3.8%
Meeting the candidates	11.5%
Party/election bloc label	0%
Friend/relative or spouse	7.7%

3) Thinking about all the pre-election information you had, did you find that you:

Had more than enough information to make an informed decision 38.4%

Had about the right amount of information to make an informed decision

46.1%

17

Had not enough information to make

an informed decision 15.3%

4) What qualities were most important in the candidates and parties you supported?

Someone I trust 34.6%

I agree with the policies advocated by 50.0%

the candidate/political party

One who will work hard to make

7.7% life better for people

5) What do you think the top priority of the new Rada ought to be?

15.3% Political stability

Economic reform 71.1%

36.5% Stopping corruption in government

13.4% Reducing crime

3.8% Ukrainian sovereignty

1.9% Other

6) Which best describes the impact of your vote?

My vote is important to Ukrainian

46.1% democracy

Voting helps determine Ukraine's future 44.2%

Elections are already determined by those in power	1.9%
Nothing will change	3.8%

7) What is your opinion about the mixed-election system?

It will ensure that majority views are represented in the Rada 51.9%

Should have only a proportional system 11.5%

Should have only single-mandate system 11.5%

It makes no difference 5.7%

Don't understand the system 17.3%

8) Who would you like to see elected president in 1999?

President Leonid Kuchma 7.7%

Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 19.2%

National Security Advisor
Volodymyr Horbulin 1.9%

Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko 1.9%

Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk 3.8%

National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko 7.7%

Other 53.8%

9) Who is responsible for Ukraine's problems today? (Pick one)

President Leonid Kuchma 69.2%

Verkhovna Rada Speaker Oleksandr Moroz 3.8%

National Security Advisor

Volodymyr Horbulin	1.9%
Former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko	5.7%
Former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk	0%
National Bank Governor Viktor Yushenko	0%
Other	17.3%
10) Sex	
Male	50.0%
Female	48.1%
11) Member of a political party?	
Yes	9.6%
No	90.3%

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IRI - Ukraine Democracy Development Program

IRI's mission in the Republic of Ukraine is to strengthen Ukrainian democracy by supporting pro-reform political parties and increasing opportunities for effective participation in the political process. The Institute seeks to accomplish this goal through grassroots political party development programs and parliamentary training for elected officials.

Ukraine, Europe's second largest nation with 51 million people, proclaimed its independence from the Soviet Union in August 1991 and immediately faced the dual challenges of restructuring its centralized economy and authoritarian political system. Unlike the often erratic reforms of many other post-Soviet nations, Ukraine has moved cautiously but steadily toward a free market economy and a multi-party democracy.

Pro-reform political parties, however, fared very poorly in Ukraine's first post-Soviet parliamentary elections, which were in March 1994. As a result of these elections, IRI designed its Ukraine program to offer consistent, sustained democracy development assistance where it is most needed -- pro-reform political parties and elected officials at the local and regional levels.

IRI seminars provide grassroots political assistance in 10 key regions of Ukraine: Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Chernivtsi, Crimea, Donetsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Odesa, Ternopil and Zhytomyr. These programs support the development of pro-reform political parties by offering practical, hands-on training in topics such as party strategy, member recruitment, youth auxiliary organization, political communication and fundraising. Likewise, parliamentary seminars contribute to the professional growth of elected officials and their staff through training in legislative strategy development, leadership skills and media relations.

A vital element of IRI's program is coalition building. Since the 1994 elections, IRI has encouraged reform party leaders to combine their energy and resources in electoral coalitions that can more successfully compete in future elections. IRI also emphasizes the importance of building community-based coalitions among democratic parties and local officials to involve more Ukrainians in local problem-solving and policy-making.

The Institute also assisted Ukrainian democrats prepare for the March 1998 parliamentary elections. IRI programs helped equip political party leaders and activists, members of political party youth organizations and candidates with the tools they needed to competitively campaign for public office.

IRI's campaign workshops heavily emphasized methods for effective voter contact and turnout plans and also provided practical instruction on campaign management, strategy, budgeting, research and other campaign skills. In addition, seminars on the techniques of public opinion polling helped Ukraine's reform parties learn how to discover voter concerns and attitudes and how to apply that information in developing campaign messages and tactics.

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