

Time to Halt Kiev’s Flouting of Basic Freedoms and the ‘Rule of Law’

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Jan. 19—As United States President-elect Donald Trump takes office, prospects for ending the conflict between NATO and Russia in Ukraine remain unclear. Without question, however, it is a moment for great political changes. One of them is that the violation of the fundamental freedoms of Ukraine’s population, by the current government in Kiev and its foreign sponsors, can and should be ended. A new case, opened in late 2024 by a U.S.-sponsored Ukrainian “anti-corruption” body against the world-famous economist and former Member of Parliament Dr. Natalia Vitrenko, illustrates such ongoing violations.

In the closing weeks of last year, the lame-duck Biden Administration did all it could to keep Ukraine fighting, drawing down weapons stocks to send Kiev new arms packages with previously authorized funding. President Joe Biden abruptly approved the use of U.S.-supplied missiles to strike deeper into Russia, which he had refrained from doing for many months. And on January 10 the White House announced new, drastic sanctions against Russia’s oil industry, sanctions that will also hit its customers in China and India.

This continued arming and instigation of Kiev to continue the war, despite horrific losses, is a linchpin of the dangerous Anglo-American effort to crush Russia through sanctions and the provocation of ever new conflicts, outlined in such strategy documents as the 2015 Chatham House paper [The Russian Challenge](#) and the RAND Corporation’s 2019 [Extending Russia: Competing from Advantageous Ground](#). With the January 9 final Biden-era meeting of the Ukraine Defense

Contact Group (Ramstein Group) for arming Ukraine and the inauguration of the new NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine command center in Wiesbaden, Germany, the new NATO Secretary General, Mark Rutte of the Netherlands, and other European war party figures are likewise trying to lock in



Court filings in Kiev show that the U.S.-funded Ukrainian National Agency on Corruption Prevention (NAZK or NACP) is violating legal norms in prosecuting Ukrainian citizens. Shown here are the NAZK logo and a picture of the Ukrainian and NATO flags, posted by the NAZK to mark its role in “cooperation between Ukraine and NATO in building integrity.”

a continuation of the war, regardless of what the new U.S. Administration does.

For his part, President-elect Donald Trump says he intends to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin “very quickly.” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov rejoined on January 13 that there has been “no substantive preparation yet, but there is a declared under-

standing and political will....” Trump’s appointee as National Security Advisor, Mike Waltz, elaborated in a January 12 TV interview, “[F]rom President Trump’s perspective, you can’t enter a deal [on Ukraine] if you don’t have some type of relationship and dialog with the other side.”

Russia’s terms for beginning any negotiations specifically on Ukraine were set forth by Putin in June 2024: withdrawal of the Armed Forces of Ukraine from the four regions incorporated into the Russian Federation since 2022, after military occupation and the conduct of referendums; and that Kiev “officially notify that it abandons its plans to join NATO.” In December, Putin remarked in his annual year-end webcast that negotiations involving Ukraine’s (acting) President Volodymyr Zelensky, whose term of office expired in May 2024, could proceed only after he “were to go through elections and gain legitimacy.” Zelensky himself, already in October 2022, signed a decree that outlaws talks between Kiev and Moscow as long as Putin remains President.

What precisely may emerge to shift the Ukraine conflict away from slaughter on the battlefield and the constant danger of escalation to nuclear war is not yet known, but getting rid of two assumptions that prevail in U.S. and European political circles will help. The first assumption, that Russia’s military intervention in Ukraine was “unprovoked,” has been refuted, most recently, in the webcast “[2025: Nuclear Doom or New Paradigm, with Ray McGovern and Helga Zepp-LaRouche](#)” (*EIR*, Jan. 10, 2024).

The second wrong assumption, which is the subject of this article, is that NATO, in fighting Russia with Ukrainian hands, is defending a model of “democracy” and the “rule of law.” Realizing the falsehood of that belief is both crucial for Ukraine’s future, and timely, as rumors swirl that forcing presidential and parliamentary elections, delayed by decree under martial law, will be an element of Trump’s policy toward Ukraine.

How fiercely will Zelensky’s clique try to hold onto power? His “trust” rating in Ukraine fell by 12 percentage points in 2024, to 52 percent, according to polling by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, *bne IntelliNews* reported January 8. Zelensky’s rating is expected to plunge still more, if he bows to pressure to conscript men aged 18-24 into the war.

Other polls indicate that Gen. Valery Zaluzhny, who

resigned as Armed Forces of Ukraine Commander-in-Chief in February 2024 and is now ambassador to the UK, would trounce Zelensky in an election held today. The Ukrainian news agency RBC Ukraine reports that Zelensky’s chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, quietly visited Zaluzhny in London last month, offering him a leadership post in the Zelensky-Yermak political party, if he would promise not to run for President. Former President Petro Poroshenko and ex-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko have likewise courted Zaluzhny, RBC Ukraine said.

The Kiev regime’s anxiety about any political opposition, real or putative, was also evident in December when MP Yuri Boyko, former leader of one of the eleven political parties banned by Zelensky in 2022, dared to make a social media post against the wholesale demolition of World War II monuments and bans on people speaking their native language (such as Russian). Boyko was summoned to the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) for interrogation and made abject apologies the next day.

The Banned Parties

On November 4, 2024, the Pechersky District Court of Kyiv found Natalia Vitrenko guilty of an administrative offense (misdemeanor)—failure to submit reports on the property, revenues, expenditures, and financial obligations of the banned Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine (PSPU), which she formerly headed. The suit was brought by the Department of Ensuring the Honesty of Political Finances, of the National Agency on Corruption Prevention (Ukrainian acronym NAZK). According to the Appellate Complaint Vitrenko filed November 19 to the Kyiv Court of Appeals, she was tried *in absentia* because the court failed to notify her of the proceedings, and was accused in the capacity of chairman of a “liquidation commission” for the PSPU—a position of which she was unaware and had never accepted.

Furthermore, the appeal states, “The court failed to investigate the fact that the Law [on Political Parties] does not obligate a banned party to submit reports on its activity. All in all, to demand reports on the operations of a party whose operations have been banned is to provoke a crime.”

The background to this case is the above-mentioned banning of eleven Ukrainian political parties in 2022, for allegedly being “pro-Russian.” Those bans were

rushed through in June-July of that year, in closed-door trials that bore little resemblance to any “rule of law.” They occurred with violations of due process, the Constitution of Ukraine, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), as was detailed in [“The Banning of Political Parties in Ukraine,”](#) a fact sheet circulated by the Schiller Institute in September 2022 (EIR, September 9, 2022).

The fact sheet documented that the clauses of the ICCPR and ECHR violated by these bans—principles such as the presumption of innocence, the right to be present at one’s trial, respect for civil and political rights regardless of “political or other opinion,” and the impermissibility of applying laws retroactively to acts committed before they became illegal—were still in force for Ukraine. These clauses were either “non-derogable” (a term referring to a signatory country’s right to “derogate from,” i.e., deviate from, its obligations under a given treaty) or Ukraine had not derogated from them upon declaring martial law. Yet Ministry of Justice of Ukraine officials publicly labelled the parties “pro-Russian,” before any court proceedings were even held.

The PSPU, registered in 1996 and led by Vitrenko, had held a bloc of seats in the Supreme Rada (Parliament) in 1998-2002; individual leaders served as MPs longer. In the 1999 presidential election, Vitrenko qualified as a candidate and received 11 percent of the vote, despite the disruption of her campaign by an assassination attempt.

In 2015-2019, the PSPU fought in the courts to overcome the Ministry of Justice’s stonewalling of its attempts to re-register the party under the post-2014 “de-communization” laws, which required political parties to excise any positive reference to the Soviet period from their official documents. During these same years, the PSPU’s central office was seized by a paramilitary gang (October 2016) under cover of a real estate dispute, and PSPU leaders Vitrenko and former MP Volodymyr Marchenko were personally attacked and barricaded in their apartments by black-shirted



Dr. Natalia Vitrenko speaks at a press conference at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, March 1, 2014, one week after the unlawful regime change in Ukraine.

“National Corps” youth (May 2015) to prevent them from publicly honoring the anniversary of victory over fascism in World War II.

Nonetheless, in December 2019 the PSPU won its case against the Ministry of Justice on the non-registration issue. Vitrenko said at the time, “I would like especially to underscore the importance, for these court victories, of the international support received during the court proceedings, thanks to parliamentary inquiries raised by MEP Marco Zanni (Independent Deputies, Italy)” in 2016 and 2018. Zanni’s question led to a statement in April 2018 from EU High Commissioner for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini, that she was personally monitoring the behavior of the Ukrainian government toward opposition parties.

In 2022, the leaders of the PSPU appealed its ban all the way to the Supreme Court, which in September of that year struck down some of the Ministry of Justice’s slanders of the PSPU, accepted by lower courts, but upheld the ban on the party. To show that “the motive for banning the Party was based on political accusations, not on any legal substantiation,” Vitrenko at the time quoted from the grounds for the ban given by the Ministry of Justice and the SBU, which included the PSPU’s opposition to Ukraine’s bid to join NATO and its advocacy of Ukraine’s maintaining a “neutral, non-bloc status” based on Ukraine’s “Declaration of Sovereignty” in 1990, which was voted up by national referendum in 1991.

With their party banned by the Supreme Court, the former PSPU leaders filed an appeal with the European

Court on Human Rights (Strasbourg Court) in December 2022. The European Court notified in July 2023 that the case had been accepted for consideration; the matter remains in the hands of the Court, which has not further acted on it.

The PSPU ceased all activity on February 24, 2022, when Russia launched its Special Military Operation in Ukraine. Neither Vitrenko nor other PSPU leaders have made any political statements from that time on, speaking out only on the legal process of their party being banned.

Outside Agencies

The Pechersky District Court fined Vitrenko 5,000 hryvnias (approximately \$120.00) plus court costs, for failing to submit reports on the operations of a banned party, which has no operations, and as chairman of a “liquidation commission” of which she had not accepted the chairmanship and about the existence of which she had not been informed. The fines will be doubled if not paid. The NAZK has drafted new charges against Vitrenko for non-reporting in the subsequent time period, sending her a summons to appear at the agency on January 22. The process of new lawsuits for every time period, new fines, and doubling of fines could be open-ended.

Furthermore, Vitrenko is threatened with being listed in official registries of debtors and of “corrupt persons,” a status that would bar her from future political activity and would put her personal property at risk. Vitrenko states in her Appellate Complaint that “the attempt by the NAZK Department to hold me liable as the head of a banned opposition party discredits me in the eyes of the public, both in Ukraine and worldwide. This damages my reputation, honor, and dignity. It also constitutes punishment of me by means of a claim on my personal funds. The NAZK is holding me liable for failure to submit a financial report on the activity of a party that has been banned by the courts, on the basis of legislation that concerns reporting requirements only for active (not banned) political parties. I believe, that is, that the government, in the person of the NAZK, is continuing to slander and discredit me as an opposition political figure in Ukraine.”

Vitrenko’s Appellate Complaint details point by point, how the NAZK and the lower court have violated, with respect to both procedural and substantive law, the Constitution of Ukraine, the ICCPR, the ECHR, and the principles of the European Commission for

Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) such as legal certainty, the prohibition of arbitrariness, access to independent and impartial courts, and equality before the law. On January 16, two months after its filing, the Kyiv Court of Appeals has scheduled a hearing on Vitrenko’s Appellate Complaint for January 22—the very time when she has been summoned to the NAZK.

The NAZK was founded in 2016, joining a complex of “anti-corruption” agencies alongside the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) and its Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office (SAPO). They have a revolving door of personnel; Victor Pavlushchuk, current head of the NAZK, is a veteran of the SBU security service and ten years at the NABU. Also a veteran of the NABU is Polina Lysenko, who in 2021 became the first head of the National Security and Defense Council’s Center for Countering Disinformation (CCD), notorious for drawing up a variety of hit lists of opponents or critics of the Kiev regime (“[Kiev’s ‘Info Terrorist’ List: ‘Global NATO’ Orders a Hit on Advocates of Peace](#),” *EIR*, Sept. 2, 2022). The NABU, initially set up in 2014 pursuant to “requirements set by the International Monetary Fund and the European Commission,” as its website states, has also worked closely with the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on joint “anti-corruption” projects since at least 2016.

Under its responsibility for policy-formation, the NAZK drafted the State Anti-Corruption Program for 2023-2025, which covers the interconnected activity of the above-mentioned agencies and receives funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The NAZK is also tasked with handing lists of persons and organizations to the SBU, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, and NATO countries as “candidates for sanctions.”

The NAZK’s current actions against Natalia Vitrenko leave little doubt that the U.S.-funded “anti-corruption” machine in Ukraine is turned against potential political opponents. While there is no guarantee that the Trump Administration will seek to discipline the unlawful behavior of U.S.-funded institutions abroad, the transition presents an opportunity to do so.

Follow these links for the full texts of Vitrenko’s [Appellate Complaint](#) and [Petition](#) (“Statement”) for cancellation of her appointment as head of the “liquidation commission” for her former political party.