

ident Leonid Kuchma in the second round, according to all the latest public opinion polls.

After the bombing, President Kuchma ordered stepped-up security for Presidential candidates. There were several diplomatically correct statements from foreign governments and international organizations, such as the calls from the Polish and British embassies, reported by Vitrenko at her press conference. U.S. State Department spokesman Jamie Rubin said on Oct. 4, that “The U.S. strongly condemns the attack on Ms. Vitrenko,” adding: “Open, peaceful, and fair Presidential elections in Ukraine are essential to the future of this important American partner. We urge the Ukrainian authorities to conduct a swift and impartial investigation into the attack.” The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights issued a press release on Oct. 5, in which its Election Observation Mission said that it “strongly condemns the violent attack on Presidential candidate Natalia Vitrenko and her supporters.”

A Radio Free Europe analyst worried aloud, that Vitrenko’s campaign had broken out of containment. “The [assassination attempt] may have an impact on the election campaign as a whole as well as voters’ preferences in the Oct. 31 ballot,” opined J. Maksymiuk, “given that the public tends to sympathize with the assailed, rather than the assailants.” While repeating the I.D.-format of dozens of international dispatches, namely, that Vitrenko’s platform features “nostalgia for the Soviet era,” the RFE writer had to admit that “Vitrenko’s election appeal is not limited to any specific social or professional group. . . . And all press reports about her campaign meetings—regardless of whether reporters are favorable or hostile toward her—underscore the fact that those meetings are usually well attended and animated. Vitrenko is not only a populist but also a popular candidate.”

On Sept. 30, the *Kyiv Post* warned an imagined audience of businessmen, “Do not ignore the Vitrenkos, as there is a bit of her in each proud and hardworking Ukrainian citizen. Structure your business venture so that it is comparably beneficial to both your shareholders and the Ukrainian workforce. Strive to achieve clean and honestly generated profits. Establish long-term, profitable institutions that share a stake in Ukraine’s future.”

The nastiest wire dispatch came from the Associated Press (see box), whose correspondent Sergei Shargorodsky wrote, under the headline “Ukraine Politician Promises Nukes”: “Imagine a European country the size of France that bristles with nuclear weapons, glorifies Marxism, censors the media and refuses to pay its foreign debt. That is Ukraine according to Natalia Vitrenko, . . . Ukraine’s ‘most unpredictable and extreme politician,’ as the *Kyiv Post* newspaper has labelled her. . . . ‘I am offering my people a way to save Ukraine,’ is the slogan Vitrenko uses to advocate her brand of socialism, laced with anti-Western sentiment, nostalgia

for Soviet times, and state aid for the poor. The political Molotov cocktail appeals to millions. . . . ‘I represent the largest threat to the existing regime, as I’m carrying constructive ideas. I’m showing what the country should do.’ ”

Vitrenko: ‘I am the only one prepared to combat economic evil’

Natalia Vitrenko and leaders of her Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine gave a press conference at midday on Oct. 6, in the press center of the Supreme Rada (Parliament of Ukraine) in Kiev. It was attended by approximately 120 journalists and 15 TV crews, including our correspondent.

Volodymyr Marchenko: We open the press conference on the progress of Natalia Vitrenko’s electoral campaign. At the outset, I would like to clarify, that we have barred from the press conference the newspapers *Den*, *Vechirny Kiev*, *Kreshchatik*, and *Ukraina i mir*, and the television channel *Inter*. We consider it the height of cynicism, that these publications have printed information containing attempts to distort facts or to prove that this was to somebody’s advantage, as well as mean-spirited remarks about Natalia Vitrenko. I ask your understanding, because our decision was prompted by our outrage upon reading these newspapers and seeing the TV coverage.

In addition to N. Vitrenko, participants in the press conference are Natalia Sokurenko, N. Vitrenko’s representative for the 33rd electoral district, Krivy Rih; People’s Deputy [Member of Parliament] Natalia Lyamar, a member of our parliamentary group; and myself, Volodymyr Marchenko, People’s Deputy. We were all participants in this tragedy; we all were wounded, so you may address questions to all of us. Natalia Mykhailivna [Vitrenko] will make some opening remarks, after which we shall attempt to answer your questions.

Natalia Vitrenko: Dear representatives of the mass media! My struggle to save Ukraine dates from 1991, from the moment that IMF [International Monetary Fund] reforms began in the country. Some people may have noticed this, and others not. It depended on the extent to which people wanted to see, and to defend the truth. But I waged my struggle—initially as an economist, and then as a People’s Deputy of Ukraine (since 1995).

The result of my struggle was that I gained support in the country, year after year. When the campaign for the election of the President of Ukraine began, that was not the beginning, but the height of my struggle—a continuation of what had emerged during my many travels around the country and meetings with people, as a People’s Deputy of Ukraine, 14th session [of the Supreme Rada]. Last autumn, winter, and spring, we had a full schedule of such meetings. We were briefing the voters on the situation in the country and arguing for our position. This is the reason for my rather high support rating, already in the spring of 1999.

With the commencement of the Presidential election campaign as such, a dirty, slanderous leaflet struggle was launched against me. I think you will remember how this began at the Parliament, in April 1999, when somebody distributed anti-Semitic leaflets in the press gallery, calling me the leader of the Jewish mafia in Ukraine. These leaflets were distributed throughout Ukraine. We immediately contacted the Prosecutor General’s office, the Security Service, and then the Central Election Commission (CEC), with a statement that this was a slander, which not only fanned inter-ethnic discord in multi-ethnic Ukraine, but also tarnished my honor and dignity.

Nobody took any steps to ascertain: Where did these leaflets come from? How could there be such a large print run? As the campaign progressed, these leaflets have shown ever greater variety and degrees of filth. We have encountered them throughout Ukraine.

It was difficult for us to collect [ballot qualification] signatures; there were attempts to hinder us from all sides, by all my opponents. Our party did collect the requisite number of signatures, but we waited a month and a half before beginning our active campaigning, in order to give my opponents the chance to “expose themselves.” There was a continuous stream of filth from their mouths; they juggled facts, and stuck labels on me.

In September 1999, [Oleksandr] Moroz’s staff was caught in the act in Chernihiv, reproducing these leaflets. The filthiest leaflets came from the direction of Moroz and [Yevhen] Marchuk. On several occasions, we detained the persons who were handing out these leaflets right at our meetings, and attempting to disrupt the meetings. In Zhytomyr Province, in the Crimea, and in Zaporizhzhya Province, we began to notice that followers of [President Leonid] Kuchma were attempting to disrupt our meetings.

In early October, we observed that the law enforcement agencies were not ensuring the proper conduct of the Presidential campaign in Ukraine. There was a very tense situation at meetings in Simferopol and Feodosia, but there were no police at the meetings. We were afraid that civilians could be hurt.

On Oct. 2, we arrived in Dnipropetrovsk Province. First thing in the morning, we taped a TV broadcast at one of

LaRouche to candidate Natalia Vitrenko

Lyndon LaRouche’s message to Natalia Vitrenko was sent to her press conference, held in Kiev on Oct. 6.

The present world financial system is in the process of disintegrating. Exactly when that doomed ship of international finance will sink, we do not know. We only know that it is sinking, will sink soon, and that nothing can keep it afloat much longer in its present form—either in Ecuador, Ukraine, or anywhere else.

Naturally, the lunatic captain of that international financial ship, whom I know very well, is ordering the mentally deranged members of the crew to destroy the lifeboats, because he does not wish anyone to lead the passengers to safety, away from his doomed ship.

I await your official statement before saying more about the recent attempt to smash the “lifeboat” you represent. Best personal wishes to you and Volodymyr.

the local channels, then we had a daytime meeting in Zholtiye Vody. There, a leaflet was handed out, saying that the building would be blown up. We went ahead with the meeting.

In Inhulets, we could sense the heated atmosphere in the hall. The slogan “Our President Is Kuchma” was hung on the wall. This was impermissible. I am his opponent, and I do not want jokes about my alleged collaboration with him. Members of our team took that slogan down. Our group was comprised of nine people in three cars. When I mentioned Moroz, during my speech, heart-rending cries sounded out: “Don’t touch Moroz! Moroz is our President!”

The hall had seats for 800, but there were around 1,000 people in the room. After a good meeting, we stayed back with our party members, to work out some things. We conferred for about 25 minutes. After we exited the hall, there were around 100 people in a well-lit courtyard. People were coming up to me, giving me flowers and a book on Roerich, as usually happens at my meetings.

We headed across the courtyard toward the cars. We had already turned toward them, when there was a roar, I saw a shower of sparks, and felt a sharp pain in my lower abdomen, on the left. It was like an arrow on fire. I crouched down at once and my first movement was to run forward, toward the car. But my aide and bodyguard, Sasha, immediately threw me to the side and changed the direction of movement. Our people were all around me, and covered me. I felt the pain in my side, but my legs were all covered

with blood. These were shrapnel wounds.

I think this was politically ordered, to eliminate me. The first grenade was aimed at my head. But it hit my aide, Volodya Ovcharenko, in the head. Here is an amateur snapshot, which shows him sitting with this head bandaged. The grenade struck him in the head, bounced off, and then exploded, wounding him in the head with several shrapnel fragments. He had a serious concussion and six shrapnel wounds to the skull.

Everybody who was standing next to me, was wounded. Marchenko has several wounds. One fragment has not yet been removed; it is lodged deep in his hand.

I am certain that this barbaric crime, which wounded 47 people, four of them seriously, two of whom are in critical condition, will be solved. The organizers of this crime did not simply want to remove me, knowing that my support rating is on the rise, and that I am the only candidate for President who proposes real pathways to the salvation of Ukraine. They also wanted to frighten the people of Ukraine. I understand why they made an attempt on me. But why kill people, who merely came out to the meeting? In order for there to be a mafia at the head of our state, installing its puppets?

I am certain, that the people of Ukraine will draw the main conclusion: The criminals have no morality. The main thing for them is greed for material gain, the desire to preserve this regime, to receive credits from the IMF, and to steal everything in the country. The greed for playing [speculative games] with bank credit resources. This greed eclipses their conscience.

Nonetheless, the hidden truth will out. Nothing will remain hidden. I absolutely do not want this tragedy to become the pretext for reprisals against my political opponents. The investigation will establish the truth, and I do not want to accuse anyone, nor to defend anyone. I know that each of them would like to eliminate me as a rival, inflaming an atmosphere of psychosis and hatred against Vitrenko.

When Ukraine learns the whole truth, the criminals will be punished.

Marchenko: I would like to outline the design of the attack to eliminate Natalia Vitrenko. Two grenades were thrown. One from behind her, aimed to hit her directly. Fortunately for Vitrenko, however, Volodymyr Ovcharenko was right next to her and he is taller, and covered Vitrenko. The grenade hit him. It did not explode at the place the criminals expected it to explode. The second grenade was thrown at the place toward which she was walking, and it also accidentally exploded to the side.

I ask the press never to speculate about various fabrications. This was not an attempt at intimidation. It was an act, aimed at the elimination of Natalia Vitrenko. And not just Vitrenko. Fortunate circumstance saved Vitrenko's life, but



Volodymyr Ovcharenko, an aide to Natalia Vitrenko and the husband of Member of Parliament Natalia Lyman, was hit by the grenade aimed at Vitrenko.

did not prevent misfortune, on a large scale, for other people.

We do not exclude any version of events, but we advocate making no accusations against any one of the political opponents, until the investigation is complete.

Q: DPA. Do you believe there will be an honest investigation of this crime? Will you trust the results of the investigation?

Vitrenko: We do not trust the objectivity of the investigation. The law enforcement agencies, after all, are mass-distributing lies every step of the way. Prosecutor General Potabenko and the Internal Affairs Ministry leadership are confusing people and distorting facts. The police don't help. I think the police were given orders: Work for Kuchma, defend Kuchma alone. Let the rest of the candidates fight it out among themselves—that's their problem. The Executive branch agencies are not trustworthy.

As for the investigative commission of the Supreme Rada, it was created in our absence, against which fact we categorically protest. Alas! Not one of the leaders of Parliament even phoned us to ask after the state of our health. Three People's Deputies were wounded! That is the height of cynicism.

Moroz, of course, knows [regional Krivy Rih head of

Moroz's campaign, Serhiy Ivanchenko well. A Presidential candidate has 230 such representatives, not 700, as Moroz claims. He has to know them all—they are his representatives!

Yesterday, notices were put up in Kiev: meeting with Vitrenko. But it turned out to be a meeting with Moroz. In order to get people to a meeting, they lied, because nobody will come to a meeting with Moroz! It is clear to everybody, that Moroz is a “burned-out” personality.

I am saddened—perhaps I am responding to all of this emotionally, a little bit like a woman, but how can these Communist deputies [Vitrenko holds up transcript of a Verkhovna Rada session] say that it was a provocation, aimed against one of the [other] Presidential candidates? What kind of a provocation is that? Grenades are thrown, a fortunate accident saves me, people cover me with their bodies, people are seriously wounded, a woman loses her leg, a man his eye. Our driver receives an open head trauma to the skull and brain, and people have open fractures of the leg! How can somebody stand up in Parliament and state that this was a provocation? And *these* people, are setting up a commission to investigate?

I do not trust that investigation. We shall conduct our own investigation. I am convinced, that the whole truth will be uncovered after my victory in the Oct. 31 election.

Q: *Politicheskyye Khroniki*. How much do you think this event will help Moroz's rating? Might not your fanatical followers organize some retaliation against Moroz? You have barred some journalists from this press conference. If you become President, what can journalists expect from you?

Vitrenko: I understand why you have such questions. Because your malice toward me is higher than your reason. On your questions:

1. Moroz did not just now start discrediting himself. His main guilt before Ukraine is that he adopted the bourgeois Constitution. There is no forgiveness for him, nor for Kuchma (first and foremost), Symonenko, Tkachenko, et al.

2. We have no fanatics. Our organization is disciplined. We do not issue a single leaflet without [leadership] approval. And we do not slander our opponents.

3. How is one to arouse the conscience or to educate journalists like Korobova, with her article “For Your Natasha and Ours”? We have sued her for that article. I pick up the newspaper *Kreshchatik* and I read: “This was an attempt not on Vitrenko, but on Moroz?” How's that? How is anybody supposed to keep reading that paper?

After the elections, will be what is after the elections. [Laughter.]

Q: [Independent journalist.] Will you continue your election campaign?

Vitrenko: Yes. Today we are going to the Donbass. We are not going to be intimidated. And people should not be afraid. The mafia will not get what it wants, namely, for

people to be afraid to come out and meet with candidates.

Q: V. Skachko, independent journalist. Are you prepared to fight it out with Kuchma to the end? Is there a place for him in the uranium mines?

Vitrenko: During my last visit to Zholtiye Vody [uranium processing center], I told the voters that a couple of our brigades would be along to work soon.

Seriously, though, I intend to battle through to the end. I have battled constantly against the pseudo-reform policy, dictated by the IMF. And Kuchma is the first champion of those reforms.

Everywhere I speak, I show this “typical collapse function” graph, I show where Ukraine fits in on it, and I say: “I am the only one prepared to combat this evil. All the other candidates—14 men—are essentially alike. Elect them, and such reforms will be continued. Elect me, and I'll change everything.”

Q: *Kontinent* magazine, G. Gongadze. Do you think that Minister of Internal Affairs Kravchenko ought to resign? What about his single version of the assassination attempt?

Vitrenko: I think he should. What kind of Internal Affairs Ministry is it, that cannot defend candidates for the Presidency? What about ordinary citizens, then?

As for the single version [the complicity of Moroz's staff], it is quite convenient—everything is patently clear and can be reported straight away to the international community. I have already received expressions of sympathy, for example, from the Ambassadors of Poland and England.

I do not dismiss and do not exclude any version. But candidates should not appoint as their representatives people who have been in trouble with the law, who previously had unpleasant encounters with law enforcement agencies, the Security Service of Ukraine, the Prosecutor's Office, or the Ministry of Internal Affairs—they have enough work to do already. Everything should be checked, all versions. In order that innocent people not suffer. And in order that whoever commissioned this crime be found. It was ordered for political reasons.

Q: *New Federalist* newspaper and *EIR* magazine. Do you think that the international financial organizations, such as the IMF, which you have criticized so sharply and fearlessly, could have been directly or indirectly party to the attempt on your life?

Vitrenko: I cannot exclude this, and I consider it entirely possible. I am certain that the IMF is trying to secure subservient people in power in Ukraine, in order to carry out the pseudo-reform policy, which has been observed, and experienced so painfully by this country, for these many years. From that standpoint, I am the only political and Presidential candidate in Ukraine, who decisively and unequivocally declares an intention to break off relations with the IMF.