

September 23, 1989

USSR: Succession in the Ukraine

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Summary:

An analysis of Shcherbitskiy's ousting from the Ukrainian Politburo.

Original Language:

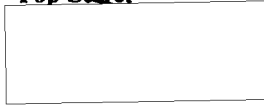
English

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6.2(d)

USSR: Succession in the Ukraine

Ukrainian party boss Shcherbitskiy, removed from the Politburo in the major shakeup at this week's Central Committee plenum, almost certainly will be replaced by a Ukrainian more sympathetic to reform and to local nationalist demands. [redacted]

6.2(d)

[redacted] the Ukrainian Central Committee today will convene to choose a new first secretary. [redacted]

3.3(b)(1)

6.2(d)

Comment: The plenum showed that General Secretary Gorbachev is intent on pushing political reform while more aggressively managing resurgent nationalism. In the Ukraine, these requirements favor Second Secretary Vladimir Ivashko and Moscow-based Central Committee Ideology Department head Aleksandr Kapto, both Ukrainians. [redacted]

6.2(d)

Ivashko is a product of the Ukrainian party apparatus, and the local party organization probably would be most comfortable with him. He is a protege of Shcherbitskiy but recently has been distancing himself from the hardline policies of his boss. Ivashko's desire to portray himself as a moderate reformer was apparent in a recent interview in which he supported contested elections and faster economic reform. Moscow may see him as someone who could finally open the door for change in the Ukraine, but he lacks credibility with nationalists and radical reformers. [redacted]

6.2(d)

If Gorbachev wants to shake up the local party organization and accelerate reform, he probably will choose Kapto. Away from the Ukrainian party for three years, Kapto probably is more in tune with Moscow's aims. Untainted by Shcherbitskiy's Russification policies, he may be in a better position than Ivashko to manage the rising tide of nationalism, negotiate with the popular front, and initiate reforms. In an interview on the eve of the Central Committee plenum, Kapto was sympathetic to non-Russian nationalist concerns about language, self-determination, and the role of the party in the republics. [redacted]

6.2(d)

Despite the evident credentials of these frontrunners, it would not be unrealistic for Gorbachev to back a darkhorse such as Yevgeniy Kusharev, head of the party cadres department for Kharkov city, who is emerging as a bold voice for reform and is termed "the Kharkov Yel'tsin" by some. [redacted]

6.2(d)



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