

**Holding Fire:  
Security Force Allegiance During Nonviolent Uprisings**

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of  
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By

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Binnendijk, Anika and Binnendijk, Hans, “Mending NATO: How to Save the Alliance” International Herald Tribune May 13, 2003.

Dedicated to Nat Hoopes, with love and gratitude.

## Abstract

This study examines strategies employed during recent episodes of popular nonviolent struggle to determine their influence on allegiances within police, military, and intelligence forces. Case study analysis traces challenger actions and security force decisions through one central episode in Serbia (2000) and then turns to two earlier Serbian episodes (1991 and 1996/1997) where challengers' efforts failed. Similarly, a central successful episode in Ukraine (2004) is examined in light of an earlier effort. (2000/2001.) Episodes of protest in four additional countries – Georgia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan – provide further variation. Data gathered through extensive interviews with participants and observers as well as written accounts is used to track the timing and nature of loyalty shifts over the course of each episode.

The study proposes a novel framework linking challenger efforts to loyalty shifts within regime security forces. Highlighting counterinsurgency theory's emphasis on the struggle for relative legitimacy, the study argues that challengers able to establish their own legitimacy and expose regime illegitimacy will be more effective in eliciting loyalty shifts than those who do not. Utilitarian considerations are also examined. The study proposes that success in eliciting loyalty shifts will additionally be influenced by the ability to raise the costs of repression, mitigate the costs to security forces of shifting allegiances, and bolster perceptions of the opposition's prospects of replacing the existing regime. Through the lens of a challenger's strategy, these might be seen as "strategic objectives" that, if fulfilled, alter the environment in which members of security forces make decisions about their allegiances.

Analysis of the cases reveals that while perceived likelihood of assuming power was the strongest determinant of large-scale loyalty shifts, each of the proposed "strategic objectives" proved relevant over the longer course of the episodes. Further, challenger actions played a critical role in influencing security force decisions. In particular, challengers' ability to mobilize new segments of society, maintain internal nonviolent discipline, and build and leverage channels of communication with security forces are highlighted as particularly significant.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This study examines strategies employed during recent episodes of unarmed insurrection to assess their impact on the decisions and actions of police, military, and intelligence forces. Reviewing successful and failed movements in Ukraine, Serbia, and four additional post-communist episodes, it offers a systematic assessment of how variations in the strategic and tactical actions of challenger groups influence the decisions of individuals in regime security forces to defect or remain loyal in the face of political crisis.

### ***The Significance of Security Force Allegiance***

In any government, security forces fulfill a critical role by providing for public order and the safety of a population. For non-democratic regimes, police, military, and intelligence institutions often serve as instruments of coercion and are capable of applying potentially devastating sanctions against challengers and dissidents. Robert Dahl noted in 1973 that “the likelihood that a government will tolerate an opposition increases...with a reduction in the capacity of the government to use violence or socio-economic sanctions to suppress an opposition.”<sup>1</sup>

Regimes that rely on coercion to maintain power are particularly dependent on the loyalty and reliability of their forces. Ted Robert Gurr highlights this relationship, postulating that “regime coercive control varies strongly with the loyalty of coercive forces to the regime.” Gurr concludes that “maximum coercive control is likely to require maximum loyalty in both scope and degree.”<sup>2</sup> Mancur Olson similarly emphasizes the

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971) 49.

<sup>2</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970) 251.

centrality of security force loyalties to the survival of authoritarian regimes, observing that if sudden changes occur in their perceptions, “all the power of an imposing regime can vanish in the night air.”<sup>3</sup>

It is unsurprising, therefore, that scholars of revolutionary war have identified security force allegiances as central to the outcome of a struggle. Vladimir Lenin observed that “a standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power,”<sup>4</sup> declaring that “no revolution of the masses can triumph without the help of a portion of the armed forces that sustained the old regime.”<sup>5</sup> In his discussion of obstacles to internal war, Harry Eckstein writes that “internal wars seem rarely to occur...when regime’s instruments of violence such as military and police, remain loyal.”<sup>6</sup> In his 2004 *World Affairs* article on security forces and democratic revolution, Mark Katz reiterates the link between security force loyalty and challenger success, citing Crane Brinton’s argument that “no government has ever fallen before attackers until it has lost control over its armed forces or lost the ability to use them effectively” and Timothy Wickham-Crowley’s conclusion that: “loyalty to the government is the most critical qualitative characteristic of armed forces, for the outcomes of rebellions and revolutionary wars hinge on that loyalty.”<sup>7</sup>

More recently, in an *International Security* article, Maria Stephan and Erica

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<sup>3</sup> Rasma Karklins and Roger Petersen, “The Decision Calculus of Protesters and Regimes: Eastern Europe 1989,” *Journal of Politics* 55, no. 3 (August 1993): 588-614.

<sup>4</sup> Vladimir Lenin, “The State and Revolution,” in *The Lenin Anthology*, ed. Robert Tucker (New York: Norton, 1975) 52. Cited in Lucan Way and Steven Levitsky, “The Dynamics of Autocratic Coercion after the Cold War,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39, no. 3 (September 2006): 387-410.

<sup>5</sup> Cited in D.E.H. Russell, *Rebellion, Revolution and Armed Force: A Comparative Study of Fifteen Countries with Special Emphasis on Cuba and South Africa* (New York: Academic Press, 1974) 3.

<sup>6</sup> Harry Eckstein, “On the Etiology of Internal Wars,” *History and Theory* 4, no. 2 (1965): 157. However, Russell disputes this point, arguing that rather than their origin, “it is their winning that seems to be impossible in this situation.” Russell (1974) 87.

<sup>7</sup> Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, 3rd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1965); Timothy Wickham-Crowley, *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes since 1956* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992). Cited in: Mark Katz, “Democratic Revolutions: Why Some Succeed, Why Others Fail,” *World Affairs* 166, no. 3 (Winter 2004): 163-170.

Chenoweth concluded, based on quantitative analysis of nonviolent resistance campaigns from 1900-2006, that campaigns that elicit security force defections are forty-six times more likely to succeed than nonviolent campaigns where defections do not occur.<sup>8</sup>

One thorough work on the relationship between security force loyalty and revolution thus was a 1974 dissertation written by DEH Russell. Based on her quantitative study of fourteen cases of attempted rebellion that measured security force loyalty in each, Russell concludes that “in no case of successful rebellion did the regime retain the loyalty of the armed forces.”<sup>9</sup> The ability to maintain security force loyalty, she argues, accounts for the surprising stability of highly oppressive regimes – in fact, her findings go so far as to claim that “if armed forces remain loyal, *a mass rebellion cannot succeed.*”<sup>10</sup> Russell’s observation that while many theorists emphasize the significance of the role of the security forces, no study has closely examined “what factors determine whether the armed forces are likely to be loyal or disloyal” continues to be the case today.<sup>11</sup> This work is intended to fill this gap within the context of unarmed insurrections.

### ***Nonviolent Uprisings***

Analysis in this study centers on the efforts of unarmed challengers to oust nondemocratic leaders. The terms “nonviolent uprisings” or “unarmed insurrections” apply to struggles waged by civilians, rather than armies or militias, and which depend primarily on nonviolent methods to achieve their objectives.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict", *International Security*, Summer 2008, Vol. 33, No. 1, Pages 7-44

<sup>9</sup> Russell (1974) 77.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid 77. Italics added.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid 81.

<sup>12</sup> Kurt Schock, *Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). Schock cites Stephen Zunes, “Unarmed Insurrections

Security force loyalty is particularly significant for those attempting to challenge the status quo without the use of violent force. As Mark Katz reasons:

“If armed forces that are loyal to the regime can almost always defeat violent, nondemocratic revolutionaries, then the task of defeating nonviolent, democratic revolutionaries clearly is far simpler. Indeed, nonviolent, democratic revolutionaries *only can succeed at toppling an authoritarian regime when the latter's armed forces demonstrate their disloyalty by failing to defend the regime.*”<sup>13</sup>

A regime’s dependence on the obedience and loyalty of those who protect it forms the foundation of theoretical literature on strategic nonviolent action. At the root of current theories on strategic nonviolent action is the assumption that a regime’s power is measured by the degree of cooperation that it receives from “people on its side”: namely bureaucrats, civil servants, official media, soldiers, policemen, etc.<sup>14</sup> vulnerabilities within these “pillars of support” belie monolithic, top-down conceptions of power that a regime may attempt to project, and provide opportunities for activists to undermine regime control.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Security Forces During the Colored Revolutions***

Comparative politics scholarship on the recent post-communist “Colored Revolutions” also emphasizes security force allegiance as a key factor determining

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against Authoritarian Government in the Third World: A New Kind of Revolution,” *Third World Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 403-426

<sup>13</sup> Katz (2004) 163-170. Italics added.

<sup>14</sup> Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973) 459; See also Helvey (2004) 8. More recently, Schock cites Ralph Summy’s emphasis on the importance of undermining state power by targeting a state’s “dependence relations.” Ralph Summy, “Nonviolence and the Case of the Extremely Ruthless Opponent,” *Pacifica Review* 6, no. 1 (May 1994): 1-29. Cited by Schock (2005) 54..

<sup>15</sup> The strategic significance of security force reliability within non-democratic contexts is thus particularly noted by authors Ackerman and Kruegler who assert that when “troops are central to a regime’s strategy for control...efforts to subvert those troops are essential.” Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1994) 37.

success or failure.<sup>16</sup> Michael McFaul cites “splits among the “guys with guns” as one of the necessary conditions for success during the Colored Revolutions.<sup>17</sup> Taras Kuzio has also reported on the contributions of the Ukrainian intelligence, police, and military forces to preventing bloodshed during the Orange Revolution, offering detailed real-time analyses throughout and following the events based on his extensive network of in-country contacts.<sup>18</sup>

In a 2006 article in a special issue of *Communist and Post Communist Studies* edited by Kuzio, three articles particularly touch upon the issue of security force loyalty within the context of the Colored Revolutions. The first, authored by Lucan Way and Steven Levitsky observes that high-intensity coercion necessitates challenges faced strong cohesion compliance, Way and Levitsky emphasize that “for coercion to be effective, subordinates within the state must reliably follow their superiors’ commands.”<sup>19</sup>

A second article by Paul D’Anieri offers a compelling argument that elite defections – particularly those of state security forces – played a critical role in altering the dynamics of popular participation in protests in both Serbia and Ukraine. Specifically, D’Anieri

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<sup>16</sup> The “Colored Revolutions” commonly refer to Serbia’s 2000 “Bulldozer Revolution,” Georgia’s 2004 “Rose Revolution,” Ukraine’s 2004 “Orange Revolution,” and Kyrgyzstan’s 2005 “Tulip Revolution.” This study will focus particularly on events in Serbia and Ukraine, with brief comparative analysis of cases in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan.

<sup>17</sup> In Ukraine, McFaul cites contacts with security elites, and the defusion of tension by the youth organization Pora as significant factors in the Orange Revolution’s ultimate success. Michael McFaul, “Transitions from Postcommunism.” *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 3 (July 2005): 14. His explanations for defections offer insights into the Serbian and Ukrainian cases – both core cases of this study. In Serbia, he credits the increasing dissatisfaction of local police, beliefs by regime elites based on protest size that “violence was no longer an option” and Zoran Djindjic’s efforts to convince security leaders to have troops stand down with preventing bloodshed on October 5. Specifically, McFaul mentions “a united and organized opposition” and “a political opposition capable of mobilizing tens of thousands or more demonstrators.” McFaul (2005). See also Michael McFaul and Anders Åslund, *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine’s Orange Democratic Breakthrough* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> See, for example Taras Kuzio, “Did Ukraine’s Security Service Really Prevent Bloodshed during the Orange Revolution?” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 2, no. 16 (January 24, 2005); and Taras Kuzio, “Security Forces Begin to Defect to Victor Yushchenko,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 1, no. 137 (December 1, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> Way and Steven (2006); Paul D’Aneiri, “Explaining the Success and Failure of Post-Communist Revolutions.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39, no. 3 (2006): 346.

argues that economic elites provided political and financial support, political elites offered the credibility and undermined regime legitimacy, and “security elites facilitated protests by declining to obstruct protests, and reduced the perceived costs of protesting, by signaling that they would not resort to violence.”<sup>20</sup> He does not, however, discuss the factors that likely lead to the elite defections themselves.

A third article, by the author of this study and former Otpor member Ivan Marovic, offers an introduction to the strategic efforts of opposition forces to elicit security force loyalty shifts in Serbia (2000) and Ukraine (2004). This study builds extensively on that preliminary work.

### **Cases and Methods**

This study considers the ways in which challengers – political and civic opposition groups – may influence the positions taken by security forces during times of political crisis. The relationship between security force loyalty and challengers’ strategic and tactical actions is assessed through detailed analysis of episodes of protest in Serbia and Ukraine, supplemented by comparisons with four additional contemporary episodes in other countries. The study addresses one central episode of challenger success in Serbia (2000) and compares it to two earlier episodes (1991 and 1996/1997) where challengers’ efforts failed. Similarly, the central episode of challenger success studied in Ukraine (2004) is compared to earlier efforts in 2000 that fell short. Episodes of protest in four additional countries – Georgia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan – provide additional

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<sup>20</sup> Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006): 11.

<sup>20</sup> Anika Binnendijk and Ivan Marovic, “Power and Persuasion: Nonviolent Strategies to Influence State Security Forces in Serbia (2000) and Ukraine (2004),” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39, no. 3 (September 2006): 411-429; Paul D’Anieri (2006).

variation in both strategy and outcome and are reviewed to shed further light on conclusions yielded by analysis of Serbia and Ukraine.

In both central cases – Serbia’s 2000 “Bulldozer Revolution” and Ukraine’s 2004 “Orange Revolution” – security forces ultimately ceased to support the regime in power. However, as might be expected, the nature and timing of different loyalty shifts often varied significantly. Within each case, therefore, varying decision processes and behaviors during the critical days of the events are traced along relevant security institutions, including military, police, and intelligence forces. The actions and decisions of key figures in each are recorded and assessed. Different behaviors and decision processes *within* each institution – for example, according to rank or geographic origin – are also recorded. Diverse security force behaviors observed within the central episodes thus provide a rich body of material for analysis.

Challenger strategies are also addressed. Each chapter first reviews of security force decisions and behaviors during critical moments in Serbia (2000) and Ukraine (2004) and then assesses the immediate implications of challenger groups’ efforts to influence these outcomes during the critical moments of the episode. Observations and analysis are organized along the framework of five “strategic objectives” proposed in Chapter 1. Providing a wider-lens perspective, the concluding section of each country chapter discusses the development and implementation of challenger strategies over the long-term course of each successful campaign.

Previous episodes of unarmed insurrection in Serbia and Ukraine that did not lead to widespread security forces defections offer opportunities for contrast. In the Serbia chapter, the March 1991 protests, which ended with army tanks in Belgrade, and winter

1996/97, which elicited police violence, are both examined. The Ukraine examines the ‘Ukraine without Kuchma’ protests of 2001, which ended in clashes between demonstrators and police forces. Discussion of each previous episode in Ukraine and Serbia begins with a review of security force behaviors and includes analysis along each of the five “strategic objectives” outlined in Chapter 1.

This approach follows from that employed by Paul D’Aneiri in his 2006 *Communist and Post Communist Studies* article to explain protest outcomes in Ukraine and Serbia. In this article, D’Aneiri uses the “paired comparison” method to contrast successful and failed cases in each country – the 1996/1997 and 2000 protests in Serbia and the 2001 and 2004 events in Ukraine. D’Aneiri’s article examines “revolution or the absence of it.” His key findings are the significance of the unity of opposition elites, defection of pro-regime elites, and neutrality of the security services in helping demonstrations to reach a “tipping point” beyond which success appears inevitable.<sup>21</sup> This work builds on D’Aneiri’s 2006 findings by focusing attention on new study variables and behaviors, and considering alternative explanatory mechanisms for the chains of events surrounding the protest episodes.

In this work, significant variations along the both study variable – strategic actions by challengers - and the dependent variable – security force loyalty shifts – offer particularly fruitful opportunities for analysis. Methodologically, the choice to examine episodes within a given country that vary along both movement strategies and behavioral outcomes within the security forces conforms to John Stuart Mill’s “method of difference.” This method advises choosing cases with similar general characteristics but

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<sup>21</sup> Paul D’Anieri. (2006)

different values on the study variables.<sup>22</sup> D’Aneiri similarly observes that variation along dependent variables allow analysts to “assess which factors are essential.”<sup>23</sup>

To check the conclusions of the Serbia and Ukraine chapters, this study further employs the “method of difference” approach to review and compare episodes of unarmed insurrection in Belarus (2006) and Uzbekistan (2005), which ended in repression by security forces. Kyrgyzstan’s 2005 Tulip revolution, where security forces ultimately backed down despite disorganized tactics and sometimes-violent behavior by protestors, is also reviewed as an outlier.

The decision to select multiple episodes within a particular country was additionally guided by insights of contentious politics scholars Doug Adam, Charles Tilly, and Sidney Tarrow who argue that mechanisms and processes occurring between a movement and a regime are best considered as sequences of interaction that evolve over time.<sup>24</sup> In both Serbia and Ukraine, challengers learned lessons between episodes, leading to changes in the methods used to address the threats posed by state security forces.<sup>25</sup> Addressing unarmed insurrection as an evolutionary process rather than a static data point helps to shed light on some of the core mechanisms at play.<sup>26</sup>

Common themes between successful strategies in Serbia (2000) and Ukraine (2004) offer an initial – though certainly incomplete – identification of relevant strategic variables through Mill’s “method of similarity,” which argues that to be considered

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<sup>22</sup> Steven Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1997) 57.

<sup>23</sup> Please see Paul D’Aneiri (2006).

<sup>24</sup> Tilly and Tarrow (2006) 11.

<sup>25</sup> Binnendijk and Marovic (2006).

<sup>26</sup> Paul D’Aneiri notes that “shifting emphasis from the idea of prerequisites allows us to focus on the *processes* of protest and revolution and on the strategic choices made by actors” D’Aneiri (2006), 338. Italics added.

necessary to a particular outcome, a factor must be present across cases.<sup>27</sup> To begin to identify what strategic factors are particularly relevant in successful cases, findings from the two central cases will be cross-checked against movement strategies in Georgia (2003), when security forces also abandoned support for their regime.

The author collected data over the course of two field research missions each to Serbia and Ukraine, yielding over fifty interviews for each country chapter. Interviewees included political opposition leaders, civil society leaders, police officers, military officers, local and western intelligence officials, journalists, analysts, scholars, and local and Western diplomats. Materials from challenger groups in Serbia and Ukraine also provided useful details. Analysis of Georgia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan is based on available news coverage. For all cases, additional information was gained through news analysis of local papers (translated by World News Connection), reports by western journalists, and other accounts of the events.

### ***Defining and Observing Allegiance***

This study defines “allegiance,” “loyalty,” “disloyalty,” and “loyalty shifts” as determined by the willingness of security forces to engage in activities perpetuating the power of the regime and - more concretely - the degree of their reliability in following superiors’ commands.<sup>28</sup>

Allegiance, loyalty and reliability are admittedly elusive concepts. Some attempts have been made to capture gradations by assigning discrete numeric values to the

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<sup>27</sup> David Black, “The Tipping Point in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution” (masters thesis, Syracuse University, 2005). Black also cites McFaul (2005) 6.

<sup>28</sup> Lucan Way and Steven Levitsky write, for example that “cohesion is essential to autocratic stability. For coercion to be effective, subordinates within the state must reliably follow their superiors’ commands.” Way and Levitsky (2006) 394.

gradients of security force reliability. Fletcher School GMAP student and Otpor strategist Slobodan Djinovic contributes to the discussion by proposing an ordinal rating system for pillars of support. He assigns a 1-5 scale to “loyalty.”<sup>29</sup> Djinovic’s system is helpful because it offers, in general terms, a snapshot of the leanings of particular segments of a given regime.

While it is useful in highlighting the evolving varying degrees of security force reliability over time, Djinovic’s five-point scale does not provide the nuance necessary to address this study’s key questions. The security force actions and decisions observed in this study arguably defy quantitative measurement and do not neatly conform to an ordinal continuum.

This study does not use a five-point scale. Instead, it describes security force behaviors within the context of a range of qualitative categories. The eight categories introduced in this study, ranked generally in the order of most loyal to least loyal, are:

- *Overdelivery*: Exhibits initiative in repressive actions and goes beyond stated orders to intensify measures taken against activists.
- *Compliance*: Can be generally relied on to execute orders issued by appropriate sources.
- *Demarcation*: Is generally compliant but privately demarcates limits on willingness to obey.
- *Heel-dragging*: Intentionally performs duties poorly (ie fails to file reports, releases activists after minimal interrogation) but maintains plausible deniability of insubordination.
- *Disregard*: Fails to carry out orders.

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<sup>29</sup> Djinovic’s rating system includes two key variables - “supportiveness” and “willingness to act” and ranges from “supportive of the regime and willing to act” to “supportive of the movement and ready to act.” Based on conversations with target groups. Slobodan Djinovic, unpublished masters thesis, The Fletcher School, 2005.

- *Subversion*: Engages in varying degrees of active but covert assistance to the opposition – for example, leaked information.
- *Renunciation*: Openly states criticism for regime or support for challenger and denounces orders from superiors.
- *Counterbalancing*: Offers to protect challengers from other security forces.

These categories serve as reference points to help delineate the many distinct actions and decisions observed throughout this study.<sup>30</sup> They are also employed to explain some absences of observable outcomes. The ability of regime leaders to use coercive force is, as scholars have noted, contingent upon the degree of confidence that their commands will be implemented.<sup>31</sup> As Gene Sharp notes, “the relationship between command and obedience is always one of mutual influence and some degree of interactions.”<sup>32</sup> Thus, orders may not be issued at all if doubts about willingness to follow them exist, creating a political analyst’s version of the problem of the “dog that didn’t bark” – in this case, attempting to peel back layers of behavior to shed light on why repression did not occur.<sup>33</sup>

### ***Strategy and Security Force Allegiance***

This study departs from many structuralist explanations of the colored revolutions by focusing on the role of challenger agency – particularly strategy – in affecting the choices

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<sup>30</sup> Offensive military support for the opposition is notably absent from this list, as it was not exhibited in the cases examined in this study. As activists have noted, a nonviolent movement only requires neutrality or unwillingness to act – too much active participation by the “guys with guns” can constitute a coup. Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Way and Levitsky (2006)

<sup>32</sup> Sharp, Gene, *Politics of Nonviolent Action*. (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973) 16.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Jervis lecture, September 2006. The “dog that didn’t bark” refers to a Sherlock Holmes story in which the absence of a dog’s bark offered a positive clue that led to the solution of the mystery.

made by individuals within police and military forces.<sup>34</sup> Following the nonviolent action approach, this study focuses on the role of skills and strategy in influencing the outcome of a nonviolent struggle.<sup>35</sup>

Scholarly accounts of security force behavior during the colored revolutions have thus far largely ignored the actions of opposition forces. Michael McFaul has explicitly declined to tackle the causal factors underlying the “splits in the guys with guns” that he cites as critical to a successful revolution.<sup>36</sup> Ukraine scholar Taras Kuzio, who offers acute insights into the inner workings of the Ukrainian security institutions, does not theorize about components of opposition strategy that led to their loyalty shifts, focusing more closely on regime type.<sup>37</sup> Henry Hale attributes the lack of violent government repression in Ukraine, Serbia, and Georgia to the fact “military and police were divided along patterns typical of patronal presidencies with lame-duck leaders.”<sup>38</sup> Paul D’Aneiri presents thoughtful commentary on the significance of elite behavior, and particularly security forces, on popular participation in protests, but fails to consider the extent to which the causal chain may also run the other way.<sup>39</sup> Lucan Way and Steven Levitsky tackle the structure-agent question more squarely, arguing that security force cohesion depends largely on such preexisting conditions as a state’s fiscal health, personal ties

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<sup>34</sup> The “structure-agent” debate in social science revolves around individuals’ constraints to influence outcomes vs broader structural constraints imposed by society, conditions, etc.

<sup>35</sup> For additional, please see Schock (2005)

<sup>36</sup> Michael McFaul, presentation, Fletcher Summer Institute, July 2006.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example Taras Kuzio, “Did Ukraine’s Security Service Really Prevent Bloodshed During the Orange Revolution?” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Issue 16 January 24, 2005; and Taras Kuzio, “Security Forces Begin to Defect to Victor Yushchenko.” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 1, Issue 137. December 1, 2004. For his focus on regime type, pls see: Taras Kuzio “Competitive authoritarianism: Regime type and politics in Ukraine under Kuchma” *Communist and Post Communist Studies*, May 2005.

<sup>38</sup> Henry Hale, “Democracy or autocracy on the march? The colored revolutions as normal dynamics of patronal presidentialism,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39, no. 3 (September 2006): 305-329.

<sup>38</sup> D’Aneiri (2006).

<sup>39</sup> D’Aneiri (2006).

between the regime and elites, shared ethnicity, or relative proximity of war, but largely dismiss the relative role of challengers' strategy.<sup>40</sup>

This study does not attempt to claim that strategy is the sole – or even sufficient – variable in determining the reliability of police, military, and intelligence forces during times of political contention. Factors beyond the scope of an opposition movement's control clearly exist. Diana Russell suggests variables such as regime resource allocation, military success, geographic dispersion, recruitment strategies conscription, and internal power struggles as potentially significant.<sup>41</sup> Robert Dahl pinpoints force size, centralization and politicization as key factors in determining the ability of a government to impose violence against its opponents.<sup>42</sup> Mancur Olson attributes changes in security force perceptions primarily to features of the regime itself, commenting that they can shift "if the cadre observe a moment of vacillation, an incident of impotence, a division of leadership, or even a collapse of analogous regimes."<sup>43</sup>

However, this study will examine the degree to which particular strategic efforts are necessary to an opposition force's success in influencing security force loyalty. Challenger strategy offers a particularly intriguing study variable. From a challenger's perspective, strategic decisions represent one of the few factors clearly in the realm of what internal war scholar Mostafa Rejai has termed the "manipulable" – factors that can be altered to maximize the probability of achieving one's goal.<sup>44</sup> While there may be little

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<sup>40</sup> Way and Levitsky (2006) Way and Levitsky further argue that the "strength of the autocratic house...may be just as important if not more important in explaining regime outcomes than the power of the opposition."

<sup>41</sup> Russell (1974).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Olson, Mancur, "The Logic of Collective Action in Soviet-type Societies," *Journal of Soviet Nationalities* 1 (1990): 8-27. Karklins and Petersen (1993) 596.

<sup>44</sup> Internal war theorist M. Rejai's distinction between "givens" and "manipulables" in revolutionary war is also useful conceptual tool - any successful strategy will leverage "givens" and manipulate those factors that can be changed to maximize the probability of achieving one's goal.

a challenger can do to influence military recruiting strategies, a state's fiscal success, or the degree of politicization within a given institution, it is able to exert agency in the choices of strategies it employs.<sup>45</sup> Reiterating her findings on the significance of security force loyalties, Russell concludes her work by observing that "for revolutionaries to come to terms with this means that they must devote a great deal of thought to how to encourage defections from the police and army."<sup>46</sup>

Analysts of the nonviolent action approach have already framed the pursuit of security force loyalty shifts within a strategic context. Peter Ackerman and Richard Kruegler offer twelve "strategic principles" for movements attempting to challenge the status quo. Three are particularly relevant for those considering the role of security force loyalty: "attack opponent's strategy for consolidating control," "mute the impact of opponents' violent weapons" and "alienate opponents from expected bases of support."<sup>47</sup>

Any strategic planning necessarily examines the interaction between context and action. Clausewitz offered commentary on the interplay between skill and fortune when he observed that "in the whole range of human activities, war most closely resembles a game of cards."<sup>48</sup> Opposition movements seeking to undermine security force loyalty may be dealt a range of circumstantial "cards," which they play with varying skill.

Strategists have long emphasized the significance of "terrain" in shaping strategy – in the

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<sup>45</sup> Russell similarly observes in the concluding chapter of her work that "there may not be much [rebels] can do about the regime's resources for coercion, but they may be able to act in certain ways to create disunity." Russell (1974) 88.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 87.

<sup>47</sup> Ackerman and Kruegler (1994). Similarly, Writers Boesrup and Mack propose that dual goals: "to alter the will of the opponent elite to conduct aggression, and to undermine their power to do so." Robert J. Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach* (New York: SUNY Press, 1996) 209.

<sup>48</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and eds. Michael Howard, Beatrice Heuser, and Peter Paret (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 27.

words of Sun Tzu, a general “unfamiliar with the mountains and forest, gorges and defiles, the shapes of marshes and wetlands...cannot gain advantages of the terrain.”<sup>49</sup>

Understanding and exploiting terrain is thus part of the strategic challenge. Ackerman and Kruegler note that history has shown that frustrations can often simmer undisclosed in authoritarian or semi-authoritarian societies without catalysts to mobilize them. During the Russian revolution of 1904-1906, although Russian soldiers were war-weary and the “government was right to be nervous about their performance in skirmishes with the opposition,” the opposition failed to exploit the “revolutionary potential” of the military.<sup>50</sup> As Ackerman and Kruegler have noted, “it is commonplace for troops under pressure to fire their weapons into the air, to disobey orders, and, less often, to change sides. The point is to *induce or exploit these types of opportunities when they arise.*”<sup>51</sup> Mark Thompson has also discussed the interplay between opportunity and strategy in his comparison of the failed and successful nonviolent democratic movements of 1989, observing that “the ability to mobilize workers was more constrained by early post-totalitarian China than by the frozen regimes of eastern Europe. Yet the students did not maximize the possibilities available to them.”<sup>52</sup>

In addition to exploiting opportunity, successful challengers may also overcome contextual constraints to create opportunities and, in the words of one author, “recast the

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<sup>49</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Ralph Sawyer (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994) 77.

<sup>50</sup> Ackerman and Kuegler, (1994) 92.

<sup>51</sup> Ackerman and Kuegler, (1994) 39.

<sup>52</sup> Mark Thompson notes: “had they built an alliance with the workers in the early weeks of the protests, labor organizations might have been created that could have better resisted the crackdown on labor groups after the declaration of martial law in mid May.” Mark R. Thompson, “To Shoot or Not to Shoot: Posttotalitarianism in China and Eastern Europe,” *Comparative Politics* 34, no. 1 (October 2001): 63-83.

<sup>52</sup> Schock (2005) 162.

political contest to one that is more favorable to challengers.”<sup>53</sup> Some conditions that appear to be static may well be malleable – as Kurt Schock notes, during popular movements in the Philippines, South Africa, and Poland, regime defection, elite divisions, and mutiny among soldiers occurred only after widespread protests captured national attention.<sup>54</sup>

This study contributes to ongoing discussions about the relative roles of strategy, skills and structural conditions by assessing efforts undertaken by challengers through the lens of five “strategic objectives” proposed in the following chapter.

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<sup>53</sup>Kurt Schock, *Unarmed Insurrection: People Power in Nondemocracies* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005) 162

<sup>54</sup>Ibid. Similarly, as Osa and Schock observe, social networks are a significant variable influencing political opportunity in nondemocracies, but are not static variables, and are influenced both by movement and regime activities. The authors similarly cite the presence or absence of influential allies, elite divisions, and availability of information flows as shaping political opportunity. MaryJane Osa and Kurt Schock, “A Long, Hard Slog: Political Opportunities, Social Networks, and the Mobilization of Dissent in Non-Democracies,” *Research on Social Movements, Conflict, and Change* 27 (2007): 137.

## **CHAPTER 1: THEORY**

Insights from a number of disciplines – security studies, political science, sociology, psychology, negotiation, and communications, to name a few – can be applied to explain collective and individual behavior during times of political crisis. Many have applicability to the question of why security forces respond the way they do in the face of resistance from challengers opposing a repressive regime. These theories frame and inform the design of five strategic objectives that if successfully pursued, this study argues, give challengers a better chance of eliciting security force loyalty shifts.

Chapter 1 reviews general areas of theory relevant to this study and then applies them more specifically to propose and defend the theoretical framework through which case study analysis will be organized. The chapter is made up of two sections. Section One offers an initial review of four core areas of theoretical literature, identifying general themes that may inform analysis of security force behavior during unarmed insurrections. Section Two distills and concretely applies the themes identified in Section One to propose five strategic objectives through which challengers may influence security force loyalties. Drilling down more deeply into relevant literature, Section Two then offers theoretical justification for each strategic objective and suggests potential avenues through which they may be successfully implemented.

## **Section One: General Overview**

This section will introduce four general areas of theoretical literature from which this study draws insights: internal war, rational choice, cognitive constraints on rationality including prospect theory and perception biases, and strategic nonviolent conflict.

### ***Literature on Internal War***

Literature on internal war offers theoretical contributions to this study by providing insights into the dynamics of intrastate conflict and stability. As noted in the introduction, scholars of internal war have emphasized the significance of security force defection in determining the outcome of internal conflict.

Scholars of internal war contribute to the strategic objectives proposed in this study by underscoring relative legitimacy as a key battleground on which regimes and challengers may compete. Donald Snow, for example, observes that “traditional insurgencies have had centers of gravity that mirror those of the regimes’, as both sides attempt to appeal to a state’s population in competition for what US President Lyndon Johnson termed “the hearts and minds of men.”<sup>1</sup> The US Central Intelligence Agency has cited “growing popular perception of regime illegitimacy” and “popular perception of insurgents as leading nationalists” as key indicators of prospective insurgent victory.<sup>2</sup> Shultz, Farah, and Lochard similarly highlight the struggle for relative legitimacy as central to the aims of insurgent groups.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Donald M. Snow, *Uncivil Wars: International Security and the New Internal Conflicts* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers Incorporated, 1996)

<sup>2</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, n.d.).

<sup>3</sup> Shultz, Farah, and Lochard, for example, define an insurgency as a “protracted political and military set of activities” including a range of actions “designed to weaken and/or destroy the power and legitimacy of a ruling government, while at the same time increasing the power and legitimacy of the armed insurgent

State legitimacy can best be understood as a broadly perceived right to rule based on laws, popular values, and ability to provide essential services to citizens. K.J. Holsti cites “vertical legitimacy,” or capacity to command loyalty, as a major component of state strength or failure.<sup>4</sup> Holsti cites O’Brien’s definition of an illegitimate government as one in which citizens "... do not readily regard their rulers as providing a legitimate authority, and state power does not rest on a secure foundation of popular belief in the right of rulers to rule."<sup>5</sup> Ted Robert Gurr underscores the existence of a “legitimacy-illegitimacy continuum” within a state, defining “illegitimacy sentiments” as “discrepancy between peoples’ expectations about the kinds of participation and security values their regimes should provide and those they actually provide.”<sup>6</sup> The US Army Stability Operations Manual writes that legitimacy:

derives from the legal framework that governs the state and the source of that authority. It reflects not only the supremacy of the law, but also the foundation upon which the law was developed: the collective will of the people through the consent of the governed...<sup>7</sup>

The manual later states that “a state’s legitimacy among its people is tied in part to its perceived ability to provide...essential services.”<sup>8</sup> While Holsti cautions that state legitimacy is not interchangeable with government popularity, the degree to which a

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group.” Richard H. Shultz, Douglas Farah, and Itamara V. Lochard, *Armed Groups: A Tier-One Security Priority*, INSS Occasional Paper 57. (Colorado: USAF Institute for National Security Studies, USAF Academy, September 2004) 17–18.

<sup>4</sup> Holsti additionally includes ability extract the resources necessary to rule and provide services, to maintain that essential element of sovereignty, a monopoly over the legitimate use of force within defined territorial limits, and to operate within the context of a consensus-based political community, and “horizontal legitimacy” or the definition and political role of community. K. J. Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 15.

<sup>5</sup> K.J. Holsti, “War, Peace, and the State of the State,” *International Political Science Review* 16, no. 4 (1995); 331. Holsti cites C.B. O’Brien “The Show of State in a Neo-Colonial Twilight: Francophone Africa,” In *Rethinking Third World Politics*, ed. J. Manor (London: Longman, 1991).

<sup>6</sup> Gurr (1970) 186.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *U.S. Army Stability Operations Manual: Field Manual 3-07*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2008) 1-07.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of the Army (2008) 3-07.

regime is credibly able to uphold the political and ethical expectations of a community and provide necessary services is likely to determine their perceived legitimacy.<sup>9</sup>

A nonstate actor challenging a regime may draw its legitimacy from other sources. John Lynn cites both ideological and grievance-based foundations for the legitimacy of insurgent groups, observing that before the USSR's decline, "Marxist, nationalist, or...religious ideology buttressed the insurgency's claims to legitimacy, but specific grievances against the ruling regime usually supplied the most compelling arguments for the claim to legitimacy."<sup>10</sup> The legitimacy of challengers, therefore, can best be defined as support for their objectives and means of pursuing those objectives. The sections outlining *Strategic Objective I* and *Strategic Objective II* discuss more specifically the theoretical links made between regime and challenger legitimacy and security force reliability.

Additionally, literature on internal war also offers some insights into strategies, conditions, and characteristics historically associated with revolutionary success or failure, providing a touchstone for analysis of a challenger and its strategies. Observations such as Greene's emphasis on cross-cutting alliances, fractures in the ruling elite, and charismatic leadership help to highlight these features when they appear in this study.<sup>11</sup>

However, as most works on internal war address broad phenomena, the body of literature does not probe individual, or unit-level, decision-making. Nor does it address

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<sup>9</sup> Holsti (1995)

<sup>10</sup> John A. Lynn, "Patterns of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," *Military Review*, July-August 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Greene, *Comparative Revolutionary Movements: Search for Theory and Justice* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974).

the unique dynamics that distinguish popular nonviolent movements from violent revolution. For these, we must seek insights from other bodies of theory.

### ***Literature on Rational Choice***

Rational choice theories begin explanations of social science phenomena at the level of the individual decision-maker. For rational choice theorists, “social and political outcomes are viewed as the collective product of individual choices.”<sup>12</sup> As a result of this assumption, rational choice models offer a fundamentally different approach than that taken by internal war theorists, focusing instead on the “microfoundations of macroprocesses and events.”<sup>13</sup> The individualist assumptions at the root of rational choice theory seem particularly relevant to security force behavior during popular uprisings, as individuals in the police, military, and intelligence services each confront personal decisions about whether or not to continue to take actions supporting the status quo.

While rational choice models vary, they generally consider decision-making along two basic dimensions - utility and probability.<sup>14</sup> Rational choice literature assumes that individuals will rationally pursue “subjective expected utility” given a certain set of preferences.<sup>15</sup> According to the rational actor model, interests and values are bundled into objectives, alternatives and potential consequences, consider, and then choices are made between alternatives.<sup>16</sup> Under decisions of risk or uncertainty, actors must attempt to

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<sup>12</sup> Stephen M. Walt, “Rigor or Rigor Mortis? Rational Choice and Security Studies,” *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999) 10.

<sup>13</sup> Mark Lichbach, *The Rebel’s Dilemma* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995). Cited in “A Model, a Method, and a Map: Rational Choice in Comparative and Historical Analysis,” In *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, eds. Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 19-41.

<sup>14</sup> James Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations* (London: Addison Wesley Longman, 2001) 560.

<sup>15</sup> Walt (1999) 10.

<sup>16</sup> Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, “Introduction,” In *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis, Second Edition* (New York: Longman, 1999) 18.

estimate probable outcomes based on the information available to them, and weigh their evaluations of particular alternatives according the perceived likelihood that they will occur.<sup>17</sup>

When applied to groups, individualist rational choice explanations can help to explain outcomes that might initially appear counterintuitive. Mancur Olson discusses the role of individual rational decision-making within the context of collective behavior. Olson notes that even if all individuals in a given group are acting rationally and would gain from a particular outcome, they may be deterred from acting because of beliefs about the actions of others within the group.<sup>18</sup> Building from Olson's observations, rationalist literature on protest presents a relevant concept known as the "collective action problem," which centers on the observation that the number of actors who participate in collective action against a regime increases the likelihood of success, improving the cost calculus for any given individual.<sup>19</sup>

The central question, as a number of authors have noted, then becomes how "tipping points" are reached that meet participation thresholds for various groups within society.<sup>20</sup> Such "tipping points," based on calculations of likelihood of success, thus influence individuals' calculations and decision-making during times of political crisis. Further

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<sup>17</sup> Steven Parsons, *Rational Choice and Politics: A Critical Introduction* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005) 58-61.

<sup>18</sup> Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971) 2.

<sup>19</sup> Joshua Tucker, "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Colored Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 3 (September 2007): 537-553; This concept is also discussed in D'Aneiri (2006).

<sup>20</sup> Paul D'Aneiri (2006) applies threshold models and the concept of "tipping points" to the decision-makers of participants during the Ukrainian and Serbian cases. Black (2005) cites Roger Petersen's model of multiple-assurance games in with varying thresholds for different groups (dissidents, students, workers, and party supporters).

discussion perceived likelihood of success and security force decision-making is addressed under *Strategic Objective V*.

Rational choice literature, which assumes set preferences, arguably does not offer adequate explanation for why particular outcomes may be preferred. Attention to the role of affective and normative factors in forming preferences is drawn in this study from literature discussing legitimacy and perception in decision-making.

### ***Literature on Cognitive Constraints: Prospect Theory and Perception Bias***

Prospect theory, proposed by economists to explain endemic failures to maximize utility, also builds on rational choice theory by identifying the important issue of loss aversion and the role it plays in decision-making.<sup>21</sup> Prospect theory thus highlights potential costs as particularly salient in decision-making. Analysis of utility calculations in decision-making has received considerable contributions from the development of prospect theory.

Prospect theorists have consistently found under experimental conditions that when making decisions under conditions of uncertainty, individuals are more sensitive to potential losses than potential gains, and are thus more willing to take risks to avoid losses than to secure gains.<sup>22</sup> As Barbara Farnham writes, prospect theory explains that “losses have a greater impact than do gains – people mind incurring a loss considerably more than they are pleased by an equivalent gain.”<sup>23</sup> Robert Jervis emphasizes the destabilizing effects of loss aversion. In limited war, he argues, escalation is more likely to be initiated

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<sup>21</sup> Jack Levy, “Prospect Theory and the Cognitive-Rational Debate,” *Decisionmaking on War and Peace: The Cognitive-Rational Debate*, eds. Nehemia Geva and Alex Mintz (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997).

<sup>22</sup> Jack S. Levy, “An Introduction to Prospect Theory,” In *Avoiding Losses/Taking Risks: Prospect Theory and International Conflict*, ed. Barbara Farnham (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> Barbara Farnham, *Avoiding Losses/Taking Risks: Prospect Theory and International Conflict* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994) 24.

“by a side that fears that failing to do so will result in significant losses than by the side that believes that expansion can bring it significant gains,” further observing that wars are “less frequently caused by aggression than by spirals of fear and insecurity.”<sup>24</sup>

Crisis situations appear to intensify the issue of cost aversion. In her analysis of President Franklin D Roosevelt’s decision-making process during the 1938 Munich Crisis, Barbara Farnham documents the emotional impact of the stress of the crisis, which, she argues led Roosevelt to inflate his calculations of the costs associated with war and shift his position to support US intervention.<sup>25</sup> Rose McDermott observes that over the course of the Iran hostage crisis, President Carter’s gamble on the riskier option of a rescue attempt was a result of his desire to recoup political losses and return to the status quo.<sup>26</sup> Both authors argue that in crises, costs become increasingly salient and their effects on decision-making more prominent.

Sensitivity to cost during times of domestic political crisis has also been highlighted by political scientists such as Robert Dahl, who postulates that “the likelihood that a government will tolerate an opposition increases as the expected costs of suppression increase” and “costs of accommodation decrease.”<sup>27</sup> Dahl argues that potential costs loom large in the decision-making processes of those with repressive capabilities as they weigh the

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<sup>24</sup> Robert Jervis, “Political Implications of Loss Aversion,” In *Avoiding Losses/Taking Risks: Prospect Theory and International Conflict*, ed. Barbara Farnham (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994) 21.

<sup>25</sup> During the course of the crisis, Farnham writes, Roosevelt moved from a conviction that US intervention was inappropriate to the belief that it was necessary. Farnham attributes the shift to his evolving assessment of the degree to which the crisis – and a potential European war – would pose a threat to US security. This assessment in turn, she argues, was influence less by changes in the factors of the case – the objective situation, she writes – was “unaltered” than by Roosevelt’s internal perceptions. As the idea of impending war – and the costs it might entail – became more emotionally compelling, he increasingly began to experience the prospect of war as a loss, and to believe that the US needed to intervene. Barbara Farnham, “Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis,” In *Avoiding Losses/Taking Risks: Prospect Theory and International Conflict* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994) 60-66.

<sup>26</sup> Rose McDermott, *Risk Taking in International Politics: Prospect Theory in American Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

<sup>27</sup> Dahl (1971).

relative merits of repression or accommodation. Given the potentially high costs surrounding the political crises examined in this study (personal security and livelihoods among them) analysis of these costs seems particularly appropriate. The insights offered by prospect theory and other theorists contribute significantly to the dual focus on increasing costs of repression and decreasing costs of accommodation proposed in *Strategic Objective III* and *Strategic Objective IV*.

Literature on the role of perception gaps in decision-making also offers insights into phenomena left unexplained by rationalist theories, highlighting the role of subjective and affective judgment in determining behavioral outcomes. Perception biases, which influence how security forces assess challengers and their choices of behavior, present a challenge to be overcome throughout each of the strategic objectives.

Robert Jervis, who has written extensively about perception biases in international affairs, argues that individuals tend to believe what they expect to see.<sup>28</sup> He observes the fact that actions of adversaries are more likely to be perceived as aggressive, because such an interpretation is consistent with an existing cognitive framework, while the same actions, undertaken by an ally, may be seen as unthreatening.<sup>29</sup> Applied to this study, one might argue that security forces predisposed to view activists as threats to their security or interests will be more likely to use force to defend the regime and the status quo, while those perceiving a movement in a less negative light are more tolerant of its existence. Preeexisting biases may be particularly pronounced during crisis situations due to the pernicious effects of “group think,” or irrational unwillingness of a decision-making unit

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<sup>28</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976) 177.

<sup>29</sup> For example, Jervis’ “security dilemma,” in which mutual perceptions of threat can lead to a suboptimal outcome, demonstrates the extent to which perceptions can ultimately alter reality. Robert Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 30 (1978) 167-214.

to incorporate new information.<sup>30</sup> Irving Janis identifies several key features of decision-making groups that can lead members to disregard informational inputs. In addition to a strong preference for unanimity, these included: insulation from outside perspectives, partial leadership, undue confidence in the group's power and morality, and stereotypical views of enemy.<sup>31</sup>

Premature cognitive closure and self-deception may be particularly strong during crises, when actors are unlikely to search for alternative sources of information.<sup>32</sup> In crisis situations, such factors may have negative consequences for activists attempting to influence the behavior of those in uniform. Recognizing this challenge, this study will examine the importance of long-term persuasion efforts to break through entrenched misconceptions through which individuals in uniform may perceive a political crisis.

### ***Literature on Strategic Nonviolent Conflict***

Works on nonviolent conflict serve as a source for many of the fundamental assumptions underlying this work. Previous scholars' observations about the nature of power and obedience, attention to strategy and tactics as key variables, discussion of potential outcomes, and features of a civic uprising frequently associated with success all serve to guide and strengthen this work.

Gene Sharp's theory of power as contingent upon cooperation and obedience, rather than violent coercion offers fundamental insights into the dynamics addressed in this

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<sup>30</sup> Additionally, the desire for cohesion and unanimity within a decision-making group may override willingness to incorporate new information. Although Janis developed his theory to describe the decision-making processes of small groups of US foreign policy elites, many of his key findings are arguably relevant to security force institutions. Irving Janus, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983). Also cited by Brian Martin and Wendy Varney, *Communicating Against Repression* (Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press, 2001) 172.

<sup>31</sup> Janus (1983). Cited in Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (2001) 598.

<sup>32</sup> Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (2001).

study.<sup>33</sup> The concept of security forces as “pillars of support,” central to the analysis of security force loyalty, also stems from the work of nonviolent conflict strategists.<sup>34</sup> As noted in the introduction, emphasis on challengers’ agency, in the form of strategy, as a key variable is another theme borrowed from works on nonviolent conflict. As Schock observes, the ‘nonviolent action approach’ tends to lean heavily on skills and strategy, rather than structural variables, to explain outcomes.<sup>35</sup> While recognizing that exogenous structural variables cannot be ignored, this study falls squarely into the nonviolent actionist camp in primacy of its focus on strategy.

Sharp proposes four ways in which nonviolent change may be manifested: “conversion,” in which a regime is persuaded to positively accept the aims of a nonviolent actionist; “accommodation,” in which a regime may grant some of a challenger’s demands without changing his viewpoint, “nonviolent coercion” in which change is achieved against a regime’s will, and disintegration: in which a regime as a whole loses cohesion.”<sup>36</sup> Although this study does not frame outcomes through “mechanisms of change” the concepts they convey do bear relevance to many of the dynamics at play and are thus referenced when relevant. .

Finally, literature on strategic nonviolent action also highlights features of a movement that have been linked in the past with success, and are worth considering in light of their potential relevance to security force loyalty shifts. A campaign able to mobilize and unify diverse elements of society appears to be one such factor. In a 2005

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<sup>33</sup> Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 2005) 415-421. Cited in Schock (2005) 38.

<sup>34</sup> Helvey (2004) 8.

<sup>35</sup> Schock (2005) 44.

<sup>36</sup> These mechanisms of change are presented by Sharp in reference to the “opponent”—in the case of this study, the regime, not necessarily security forces.

Study *How Freedom is Won*, Ackerman and Freedom House president Adrian Karatnycky concluded after a review of Freedom House statistics surrounding transitions in 67 nations that, in nearly half of the successful cases, broad-based, bottom up coalitions were highly active, and in many cases central to steering the process of change.<sup>37</sup>

Writers on nonviolent conflict have also theorized that challengers able to maintain nonviolent discipline are more likely to achieve their objectives.<sup>38</sup> Sharp and others argue that activists who remain nonviolent are more likely to persuade security forces of the legitimacy of their cause, to increase potential popular backlashes against repression, and to attract more civilians to the movement if they are able to maintain nonviolent discipline.<sup>39</sup>

Current literature on nonviolent conflict, while it offers insights into the broad dynamics of civic struggle, has yet to develop a systematic framework through which to understand security force defections and a challenger's role therein. This work, supported by other bodies of literature, addresses that gap.

## **Section Two: Five Strategic Objectives and Theoretical Foundations**

Review of the four areas of literature addressed in Section I indicates that relative legitimacy, potential cost, and perceived inevitability of success are likely to be

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<sup>37</sup> Adrian Karatnycky and Peter Ackerman, *How Freedom Is Won: From Civic Resistance to Durable Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Freedom House, 2005) 7.

<sup>38</sup> Stephan and Chenoweth found that nonviolent resistance methods—when fully mobilized to constitute “major” campaigns—are about twice as likely to achieve movement objectives than are violent uprisings Stephan and Chenoweth (2008).

<sup>39</sup> Nonviolent actionists may try to destroy the opponent’s army as an effective force of repression by inducing deliberate inefficiency and open mutiny among the soldiers, without whom there can be no army. In contrast, military actionist would usually fight that army intact and attempt to defeat it by destroying its weapons and killing its soldiers. Such attacks on them would usually reinforce, not disrupt or destroy, their obedience patterns.” Sharp (1973) 453.

battlegrounds over which regimes and challengers compete in the struggle for security force loyalty. This study attempts to operationalize the theoretical themes identified in Section I by proposing five strategic objectives which, it is hypothesized, must be addressed and at least partially achieved if challengers intend to effect shifts in security force loyalty. Two objectives address legitimacy, two address cost, the fifth addresses perceived probabilities of success. They are:

- 1) Expose regime illegitimacy
- 2) Establish challenger legitimacy
- 3) Raise the costs of repression
- 4) Mitigate the costs of accommodation
- 5) Demonstrate likelihood of success

In a fluid political environment, these proposed strategic objectives offer a framework through which the efforts of the nonviolent movement over the course of a campaign may be assessed and linked to security force loyalty shifts. Each strategic objective represents an original distillation of concepts presented in previous literature and is discussed and explained in the following sections through a more granular review of relevant theory.

### ***Strategic Objective I: Expose Regime Illegitimacy***

The first proposed objective suggests that individuals in the police and military services are more likely to obey the orders of a regime they consider to be legitimate than one that they believe has, in the words of one diplomat, “lost the mantle of authority.”<sup>40</sup> Ability to wield tactics to expose the illegitimacy of the incumbent regime is likely to aid a challenger in inducing security force loyalty shifts.

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<sup>40</sup> Western Diplomat. Personal Interview. July 24, 2008.

Regime unpopularity has been cited as a critical factor determining the success of the Colored Revolutions.<sup>41</sup> Karl Deutsch similarly observed that “if totalitarian power must be used at all times against the entire population, it is unlikely to remain powerful for long.”<sup>42</sup> Harry Eckstein, in his *Etiology of Internal Wars*, cites the importance of “disorienting social processes” that shift legitimacy away from a governing regime while Thomas Greene notes that “as a government declines in legitimacy, revolutionary potential increases.”<sup>43</sup> Ted Robert Gurr argues that “illegitimacy sentiments” closely correspond to compliance with a regime’s demands.<sup>44</sup>

Comparative analysis of cases in Eastern Europe and China offer evidence to support the interconnections between regime legitimacy, popular mobilization, and security force loyalty. In their discussion of “tipping points” and the decision calculus of protestors and regimes in 1989, Karklins and Petersen conclude that legitimacy was a significant factor in determining democratic successes in Eastern Europe and failure China that year.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, Mark Thompson highlights “party legitimacy” as a factor determining the varied outcomes between the Chinese and Eastern European protests of 1989, and observes that the “Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was able to survive the crisis in 1989

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<sup>41</sup> McFaul (2005).

<sup>42</sup> Karl Deutsch, “Cracks in the Monolith: Possibilities and Patterns,” In *Totalitarianism*, Carl Freidrich (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954) 315.

<sup>43</sup> Eckstein highlights insurgency strategy by discussing the dynamics of “subversion,” or as he frames it, deliberate efforts to “activate disorientation, to form new political orientations, and to impede the efficacy of elites” Eckstein (1965) 145; Greene (1974) does note that he is “concerned less with why revolutionary movements fail or succeed than with why they arise at all.”

<sup>44</sup> Gurr outlines the foundations of the link between legitimacy and obedience in individual and group psychology, citing group studies by Raven and French – relationship between legitimacy and compliance, as well as Milgram’s renouned obedience experiment. Gurr (1970) 186.

<sup>45</sup> Karklins and Petersen write that the Chinese regime’s legitimacy established through its “homegrown revolution” was more difficult to assail, and thus “the Chinese protesters did not challenge the regime itself, in contrast to protesters in Czechoslovakia and East Germany. There the protester also had an easier time challenging the legitimacy of the regimes, especially so in Czechoslovakia where any lingering legitimacy was destroyed by the invasion of 1968.” Karklins and Petersen (1993) 611.

because it maintained the belief in its own ‘virtue,’ and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) remained loyal and obeyed orders to shoot.”<sup>46</sup>

Psychological studies on obedience reinforce its relationship to a perception of legitimate authority. In his classic set of experiments in which subjects were ordered to administer electrical shocks to increasingly distressed “victims,” Stanley Milgram found that variations in obedience levels were primarily a function of who was issuing the orders, and whether they were considered to be a legitimate authority.<sup>47</sup> However, if questions were raised about the authority’s right to issue instructions, they were more likely to be disobeyed.

Milgram’s findings correspond to observations by scholars on nonviolent action and revolutionary war. Gene Sharp’s observation that all rulers “require an acceptance of their [legitimate] authority: their right to rule, command, and be obeyed... the key to habitual obedience is to reach the mind.”<sup>48</sup> Similarly, Gurr discusses the positions of security force members and argues that loyalty is likely to be greatest if based on “feelings that the regime is legitimate rather than on threat of negative sanctions.”<sup>49</sup> He cites Jerome Frank’s observation that “obedience to legitimate authority is one of the strongest motivating forces in the life of all normal members of organized societies.” He

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<sup>46</sup> Thompson emphasizes the link between legitimacy and obedience, citing the observation that “even where ...[mass] legitimacy plays little or no part in the relationship between rulers and subjects the mode of legitimization retains its significance as the basis for the relationship of authority between rulers and the administrative staff.” Thompson (2001) 65.

<sup>47</sup> As one scholar has since noted, Milgram found that regardless of instructions, “a legitimate authority is obeyed, whether the instructions are to shock or stop shocking...” Arthur Miller, *The Obedience Experiments: A Case Study of Controversy in Social Science* (New York: Praeger, 1986).

<sup>48</sup> Sharp (2005) 31.

<sup>49</sup> Gurr (1970) 252.

adds that this obedience “makes men willing to commit virtually unlimited aggression at the dictates of legitimate authorities.”<sup>50</sup>

Perceptions of regime legitimacy may influence the outcome preferred by individuals in uniform. Even scholars of rationalist decision-making build subjective perceptions and norms into decision-makers’ calculations of prospects and preferred outcomes.<sup>51</sup> If security forces feel that a regime is illegitimate, they may embrace an outcome that overturns its rule. They also may be more likely to resist the regime. Muller and Opp, who discuss what they term “rebellious action” in the context of rational choice theory, link the decision of individual civilians to engage in protest to the person’s perception of government legitimacy. They argue that an individual who is “fundamentally alienated from the existing government and political institutions would be likely to regard change resulting from rebellious behavior as a public good”, while someone who is “proud of the political institutions under which he or she is governed, and who believes that they operate to promote justice and protect the basic rights of citizens” see it as a “public bad.”<sup>52</sup> Muller and Opp’s study of survey data from New York and Hamburg concluded that the decision to engage in protests was closely tied to support of or alienation from the government - their research concluded that “public goods incentives” consistently had a “significant impact on participation in rebellious collective action.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Gurr (1970) 189. Cites Jerome Frank, *Sanity and Survival: Psychological Aspects of War and Peace* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968).

<sup>51</sup> Levy (1994) 15.

<sup>52</sup> Edward N. Muller; Karl-Dieter Opp “Rational Choice and Rebellious Collective Action” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 80, No. 2. (Jun., 1986) 471-488.

<sup>53</sup> Muller and Op (1986), 481. Perhaps surprisingly, the team even found that respondents who believed that rebellious behavior would be costly were slightly but significantly more likely to engage in such action than those who believed that the costs would be low, providing potential evidence for the motivation provided by perceptions of the “existing regime as extremely repressive.”

As Holsti observes, a government's legitimacy is not a constant variable.<sup>54</sup> Factors such as political blunders, failed wars, or languishing economies – if skillfully exploited – can provide opportunities to undermine regime legitimacy. Such factors provide potential opportunities to opposition forces to generate “critical events” that underscore grievances and “galvanize...a coordinated response by large segments of the population.”<sup>55</sup> Osa & Schock, for example, cite the fact that as demonstrations grow to include more moderate elements of the population “bystanders realized that the government is less legitimate than they had thought, and they may begin to protest as well.”<sup>56</sup>

As they attempt to achieve *Strategic Objective I*, challengers are likely to benefit from the pursuit of at least two efforts. The first to translate regime blunders into “critical events.” This ability derives in part from effective messaging and communications strategies: as Greene reminds us, a “successful revolutionary leader... is able to interpret general conditions into terms that have meaning for the everyday life of rank-and-file citizens. He does not implant new ideas as much as he summarizes them in an especially coherent and appealing way; he simplifies complexity.”<sup>57</sup> It may also be traced to technical expertise. The use of parallel votes by civil society groups to expose election fraud as a rallying point for popular responses has also particularly been noted in the literature on the Colored Revolutions – their role in security force loyalty shifts will also be examined in this study.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Holsti (1996).

<sup>55</sup> Karen Rasler, “Concessions, Repression, and Political Protest in the Iranian Revolution,” *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 1. (February 1996): 135.

<sup>56</sup> Osa and Schock (2007) 137.

<sup>57</sup> Greene (1974) 52.

<sup>58</sup> McFaul (2005), for example, cites a challenger’s ability to expose election fraud as critical. Joshua Tucker also discusses the role of flawed elections in prompting individuals across society are more likely to take

A second – related – challenge is to frame repression within the context of regime illegitimacy. For those within policy and military institutions, where obedience and command hierarchies are cultivated as core values, dissonance between loyalty to superiors and loyalty to state may elicit hesitation. As Gene Sharp has written, “commands are also obeyed because they are considered legitimate owing to their source and their issuer.”<sup>59</sup> Therefore, if challengers can successfully claim that superiors’ commands fail to reflect state interests, such commands may be less likely to be obeyed.

### ***Strategic Objective II: Establish Challenger Legitimacy***

The second strategic objective proposed in this study addresses the perceptions of opposition forces and activists in the eyes of those in uniform. It posits that individuals may be less likely to engage in repression against groups they can identify with, and which they feel are pursuing a legitimate agenda through legitimate means.

Negotiation theorists have highlighted the significance of perceptions of those on opposite sides of a conflict. Pruitt and Carnevale, for example, write that social science experiments have shown that “as might be expected, there is more concession making and problem solving in negotiation between people with positive relationships than with those with negative relationships or no relationships.”<sup>60</sup> Richard Fisher similarly emphasizes the “power of a good relationship” which can reduce unnecessary animosity

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part in protests after fraud because “major electoral fraud followed by large scale protests can dramatically raise the likelihood of a successful ‘result’ from one’s participation in an anti-regime protest.” Tucker (2007) 17. Paul D’Aneiri makes a similar point, also citing Tucker. D’Aneiri (2006).

<sup>59</sup> Sharp observes that “if the command is...seen as being in accordance with tradition, established law and constitution, if the ruler has obtained his position through the established procedure, then the subject will usually feel a greater obligation to obey...” Sharp (1973) 21.

<sup>60</sup> D.G. Pruitt and P.J. Carnevale, *Negotiation in Social Conflict*, (Pacific Grove, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1993).

through the development of mutual trust and communication.<sup>61</sup> Given the significance of perception bias in determining the outcome of a conflict, negotiation experts stress the importance of framing issues so as to overcome potential prejudices.<sup>62</sup>

Perceptions of movement activists by security forces have also been identified as relevant within the literature on nonviolent conflict. Sharp hypothesizes that if an “opponent group sees the grievance group as members of a ‘common moral order,’” this perception is likely to encourage better treatment and a more sympathetic response to their efforts.<sup>63</sup> Sharp refers to this as the “social distance” between the campaign and the security apparatus, and argues that the wider the social distance, the more likely it is that police and soldiers will engage in brutality against nonviolent activists.<sup>64</sup> Challengers viewed as part of a common moral order, and may be more likely to elicit loyalty shifts

Unsurprisingly, regimes often employ tactics to prevent challengers from establishing legitimacy in the eyes of the security forces. Smear campaigns and anti-opposition propaganda may be employed to “devalue” regime opponents.<sup>65</sup> Regime leaders may also import forces from other regions when they want to engage in repression. These tactics are often institutionalized: in the Soviet Union, for example, Ukrainian soldiers were rarely stationed for long periods of time within Ukraine.

Within security forces, institutional biases against challenges to the status quo may also impede attempts to reduce “social distance” and establish movement legitimacy.

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<sup>61</sup> Richard Fisher, “Negotiating Power: Getting and Using Influence,” In *Negotiation Theory and Practice*, eds. J.W. Breslin & J.Z. Rubin (Cambridge: PON Books, 1991).

<sup>62</sup> R. J. Lewicki, D. M. Saunders, and J. W. Minton, eds. *Essentials of Negotiation*. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2003): 148.

<sup>63</sup> Sharp (1973) 712; cited in Schock (2005) 41.

<sup>64</sup> Sharp (1973) 712-716.

<sup>65</sup> Martin writes that in “devaluation of the target,” “the moral worth of an individual or group suffering injustice is reduced.” Brian Martin, *Justice Ignited: The Dynamics of Backfire* (Maryland: Roman and Littlefield, 2007) 4.

Legal restrictions against protest – and efforts to inculcate this norm within security forces – can create significant barriers to a challenger’s ability to demonstrate legitimacy. Institutionalized indoctrination may reinforce stereotyped views of adversaries and amplify confidence in the prevailing assumptions and paradigms of the organization. Martin and Varney, citing James Aho’s work on the sociology of “the enemy,” address the problem of mutual “myth making” between adversaries that predicts negative behavior and rationalizes violent actions. Soldiers and police believing themselves to act “righteously” will “respond ‘appropriately’ to those they have designated as evil – with secrecy, caution, cunning, and if necessary, cruelty. To act in any other way would be imprudent.”<sup>66</sup>

The challenge to opposition actors, therefore, in achieving Strategic Objective II is multifold. They must break through institutional filters and negative “myths” to convince at least some portions of the security forces of the legitimacy of their intentions, methods, and membership. As Martin and Varney argue, in interactions between protestors and soldiers, it is “crucial to success that resistors, as much as possible, avoid a process whereby each party constructs an image of the other as an enemy.”<sup>67</sup>

One proposed tactic to break through negative “myths” and persuade security forces of challengers legitimacy draws from the notion – observed both in marketing and in political choice – that persuasion messages are most effectively conveyed through social networks.<sup>68</sup> Within the marketing context, word-of-mouth and viral marketing concepts

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<sup>66</sup> James Aho, *This Thing of Darkness: A Sociology of the Enemy* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992). Cited in Martin and Varney (2001) 48.

<sup>67</sup> Martin and Varney (2001) 48.

<sup>68</sup> For example in one recent poll of Canadian consumers, 80% said they were “very or somewhat more likely to consider buying products recommended by real-world friends and family, while only 23% reported being very or somewhat likely to consider a product pushed by ‘well-known bloggers.’” Gavin O’Malley

operate under the assumption that products most effectively advertised through the grapevine, by communities that can be reinforced and spread positive reactions.<sup>69</sup> The same principle may operate in the political context – according to one recent study, “the likelihood of supporting a policy increases when one's social network supports a party that advocates that policy.”<sup>70</sup> Also, as Osa and Schock note, social networks may be particularly important for circulating information in closed societies, where access to uncensored media is limited.<sup>71</sup> Challengers' abilities to deliver their message to the friends and families of security forces may determine the overall effectiveness of their persuasion efforts.<sup>72</sup>

A second challenge raised in the literature is the ability to obtain “certification” from an external authority respected by security forces.<sup>73</sup> Tilly and Tarrow, who link this factor to movement legitimacy, tie security force disintegration to processes of

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<sup>68</sup>“Study: 'Influencers' Possess Less Clout *MediaPost Publications*. April 3, 2008. Available at: [www.pollara.ca/Library/News/04032008-study.htm](http://www.pollara.ca/Library/News/04032008-study.htm)

<sup>69</sup>Viral marketing, *The Economist* (December 1, 2008).

<sup>70</sup>The phenomenon held even when the authors controlled for political knowledge of the respondent, network size, partisanship, ideology, socioeconomic, and policy-specific determinants. “The Influence of Political Discussion on Policy Preference: A comparison of the United States and Japan.” Sean Richey and Ken’ichi Ikeda. *Japanese Journal of Political Science* Cambridge University Press. (2006), 7:3:273-288. See also: Jeffrey Levine, “Choosing Alone? The Social Network Basis of Modern Political Choice Chapter in Alan Zuckerman, “*The Social Logic of Politics: Personal Networks as Contexts for Political Behavior*. Temple University Press (2005)

<sup>71</sup>Osa and Schock (2007) 138

<sup>72</sup>Notably, security force members who live within the communities that they work in, such as local police, are likely more tied into accessible social networks than others. Military conscripts drawn directly from the populace are also more likely to retain close ties to their social networks and may reflect similar sentiments. As one Tiananmen scholar observes, “the Chinese were certainly aware of the risks of contamination of a conscript army, and thus when the decision was taken to use lethal force, it had to be a swift and ruthless operation.” Segal and Phipps, “Why Communist Armies Defend their Parties,” *Asian Survey* (October 1999): 971. Helvey hypothesizes too that “Unlike police personnel who live and work in the local community, military units are often separated from civilian society... this separation from the public tends to hinder the development of personal relationships between military and civilian families. When a government decides to intervene with army forces in open political conflict, there is less incentive on the part of military units to exercise restraint in the use of violence.” Helvey (2004) 11.

<sup>73</sup>Certification, defined as an outside authority’s willing to signal “its readiness to recognize and support the existence and claims of a political actor” is highlighted by Tilly and Tarrow as a significant mechanism in determining movement legitimacy. Tilly and Tarrow (2007) 34.

“decertification.”<sup>74</sup> An outside party validating the claims made by an opposition movement can be an invaluable strategic asset in a battle for legitimacy – Pope John Paul II’s June 1979 visit to Poland, for example proved an important validating force for the strikers at Gdansk.<sup>75</sup>

A third quality likely needed for legitimacy is a good defense; a challenger’s ability to successfully parry against regime attempts to “devalue” it through propaganda attacks. Effective communication about the nature of the movement may help to counteract smear tactics used by a regime to “devalue” the challenger.<sup>76</sup> The behavior of participants – and their ability to remain nonviolent – may thus prove particularly important.<sup>77</sup> A challenger’s ability to convincingly deny charges laid against it and to behave in a manner that belies these charges is more likely to be perceived as legitimate.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, the size and composition of a challenger group’s supporters may send a clear message to security forces about the principles and objectives it pursues. As Jack Duvall observes, without a broad-based consensus over its goals, “a movement can’t claim to represent the aspirations of the people and its calls for action won’t enlist full participation.”<sup>79</sup> Conversely, when it is visibly able to appeal to a broad swath of the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 159.

<sup>75</sup> Joshua Paulson, “Poland’s Self Liberation 1980-1989” In *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*, ed. Gene Sharp (Boston: Porter Sargent, 2005) 224.

<sup>76</sup> Martin (2007) 4-7. Schock also cites Ackerman and Kruegler’s observation that “swift and accurate communications are also necessary to...counter enemy propaganda...” Schock (2005) 169. Ackerman and Kruegler (1994) 31

<sup>77</sup> Stephan and Chenoweth observe in their case study analysis of East Timor that during the violent campaign within East Timor, reprisals against security forces merely solidified the resolve of the Indonesian military, while the nonviolent campaign “actually produced some loyalty shifts, particularly within the ranks of younger officers.” Stephan and Chenoweth (2007).

<sup>78</sup> Sharp writes: “If the nonviolent struggle group deliberately seeks to achieve change through conversion of its opponents, it can facilitate this mechanism by refraining from violence and hostility, attempting to gain the opponent’s trust by truthfulness, remaining open concerning intentions, exhibiting chivalry, maintaining a pleasant physical appearance...maintaining personal contact with the opponent.” Sharp (2005) 417.

<sup>79</sup> Jack Duval, “The Right to Rise Up: People Power and the Virtues of Civic Disruption.” Remarks at Lawrence University, 2006.

population, defections may appear increasingly acceptable.<sup>80</sup> When a broad spectrum of civilians participate in opposition activities, legitimacy may be more effectively transferred from the regime to the movement.<sup>81</sup>

### ***Strategic Objective III: Raise the Costs of Repression***

The third objective proposed in this study suggests that increased costs of repression are likely to correspond to decreased security force reliability. Rational choice theorists Karklins and Petersen observe that, “repressive regimes do not fall simply because citizen protests illustrate the regime's lack of legitimacy.”<sup>82</sup> More is needed. Negotiation theorists Rubin and Salacuse similarly emphasize the limits of normative claims, noting that without power, “an unvarnished appeal to principle as a basis for negotiation may even backfire, as...such appeals may be (correctly) seen by the more powerful party as an unartful bluff in a poker game, a failed attempt to conceal a bad hand.”<sup>83</sup>

Power matters. Other negotiation theorists underscore the significance of power to inflict costs. Carnevall and Pruitt cite empirical studies indicating that when one party had “unique power to punish the other negotiator, the party with higher power made fewer concessions than the one with lower power” and that better outcomes were usually achieved by the party with higher power.<sup>84</sup> Clinical experiments indicate that when two parties have mutual capacity for coercion, they are usually more cautious about not

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<sup>80</sup> Stephan and Chenoweth write that the Philippines, although violent guerrilla warfare aimed at toppling the Marcos regime had been unsuccessful in eliciting security force defections, the popular nature of the opposition resistance legitimized military defection. Stephan and Chenoweth (2007))

<sup>81</sup> Sharp (1973) 21. Sharp observes that “in revolutionary situations, legitimacy may derive not from tradition but from “the people... and activities during the struggle against the previous, now ‘illegitimate’ ruler or system.”

<sup>82</sup> Karklins and Petersen (1993) 596.

<sup>83</sup> J. Z. Rubin and J. W. Salacuse, “The Problem of Power in Negotiation,” *International Affairs* (April 1990). They also note that arguing that “appeal to principle alone is rarely an effective strategy, because both sides base their position on principle.

<sup>84</sup> Pruitt and Carnevale (1993) 130.

antagonizing each other.<sup>85</sup> Likewise, in their review of twenty-eight experiments on power asymmetry, Rubin and Zartman (1995) conclude that in most cases, “negotiators with high relative power tend to behave manipulatively and exploitatively, while those with perceived lower power tend to behave submissively.”<sup>86</sup> As Lax and Sebenius observe, in determining relative bargaining power, the “‘otherwise’ becomes crucial.”

<sup>87</sup>Cooperation, they argue, is more likely in situations where “the *status quo ante* may be superseded by something much worse for one side.”<sup>88</sup>

Increasing the costs of repression is likely to be particularly relevant in situations where security forces are unconvinced or indifferent to the relative legitimacy of the regime vs the opposition. The existence of an undesirable alternative is fundamental to Robert Axelrod’s discussion of possibilities for cooperation “without friendship or foresight”.<sup>89</sup> Indeed, he argues, “under suitable circumstances, cooperation can develop even between antagonists.”<sup>90</sup> To illustrate his point, Axelrod describes the *de facto* stalemates that developed between British and German soldiers entrenched on WWI’s Western front. Soldiers on both sides eventually achieved an implicit ‘truce’, which they perpetuated through “perfunctory use of small arms and deliberately harmless use of artillery” in order to satisfy their superior officers without causing harm to the other side. Despite the fact that their armies were engaged in a zero-sum struggle, “rewards of mutual restraint [were] preferred by the local units to the outcome of mutual punishment, since mutual punishment would imply that both units would suffer for little or no relative

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<sup>85</sup> Pruitt and Carnevale (1993) 132.

<sup>86</sup> Jeffrey Rubin and William Zartman, “Asymmetrical Negotiations: Some Results that May Surprise,” *Negotiation Journal* (October 1995).

<sup>87</sup> Lax, David A., and James K. Sebenius. *The Manager as Negotiator: Bargaining for Cooperation and Competitive Gain*. (N.Y.: Free Press, 1986) 97

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 99.

<sup>89</sup> Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books Baldwin, 1984) 86.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 86.

gain.”<sup>91</sup> This mutual deterrence required that both parties have strong incentives to avoid open conflict.<sup>92</sup>

Deterrence, according to its most basic definition, is the persuasion of an opponent that the costs and risks of a given course of action outweigh its benefits, thus dissuading an opponent from acting. By increasing the costs of repression, a movement can hope to deter those individuals within the security forces who might otherwise be motivated to crack down. Robert Dahl, applying the concept within the context of internal state struggle, argues that while an increase in opposition power may be costly to a regime, under some circumstances “suppression might be very much more costly and hence obviously foolish.”<sup>93</sup>

Theorists have discussed a number of elements of opposition strategy that may raise the costs of repression. The concept of “political jiu-jitsu,” coined by Gene Sharp, is central to the literature on nonviolent strategy. In his chapter on political jiu-jitsu, Sharp argues that the costs to a regime of using violent force can sometimes be greater than those inflicted on a nonviolent movement.<sup>94</sup> In his comparative study of revolutions, Thomas Greene similarly notes that when a government is perceived as illegitimately engaging in violent repression,” those already committed to reform may be radicalized... and those citizens who are normally passive or politically apathetic may be politicized by government violence, which thus enlarges the number of activists.”<sup>95</sup> While debate continues within the literature on repression as to the precise relationship between

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid. 75.

<sup>92</sup> This created, in the words of Axelrod, a “prisoner’s dilemma between small units facing each other in a given immobile sector.” Ibid. 75.

<sup>93</sup> Dahl (1971) 15.

<sup>94</sup> Sharp (1973) 659-697.

<sup>95</sup> Greene (1974) 141-142.

mobilization and repression, there is evidence to suggest that in some cases, repressive actions can spur mobilization, thus increasing the costs of crackdowns.<sup>96</sup>

In his description of the phenomenon of ‘political jiu-jitsu’, Sharp argues that “by combining nonviolent discipline with solidarity and persistence in struggle, the nonviolent actionists cause the violence of...repression to be exposed in the worst possible light.”<sup>97</sup> Since Sharp’s work on the issue, other writers in the field – most notably Brian Martin – have further developed the concept and considered tactics associated with influencing the relative costs of repression. Brian Martin’s concept of “backfire”, derived from political jiu-jitsu, is “an action that recoils against its originators,” making repression “worse than having done nothing.”<sup>98</sup> Martin writes that two principal factors are critical in order for the “backfire” dynamic to occur: perception of injustice and communication to receptive and relevant audiences.<sup>99</sup> He outlines five tactics for increasing outrage over injustice, including “exposing the action,” “validating the target,” “emphasizing interpretation of the action as an injustice,” “mobilizing public concern” and “resisting and exposing intimidation and bribery.”<sup>100</sup> If perpetrators of violent repression face the prospects of sanctions incurred by outraged communities, they may be deterred from action.

One of the keys to achieving Strategic Objective III, then, is identifying and communicating with those communities that can impose meaningful sanctions upon

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<sup>96</sup> The effects of repression on dissent are still under debate. As Osa and Schock note, scholars have found various and sometimes conflicting relationships between repression and dissent levels. Some studies observe negative relationships, in which more repression elicits less dissent, some find positive relationships, in which repression raises dissent levels, and others cite an “inverted U” relationship, in which dissent mobilization occurs after a minimal amount of repression but is stifled at higher levels. Osa and Schock (2007) 133-134.

<sup>97</sup> Sharp (1973) 657.

<sup>98</sup> Martin (2007) 2.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. 187.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.193-198.

perpetrators of violence.<sup>101</sup> Within the conflict, this may include communities close to security forces that can exercise social censure, or other domestic publics that may be mobilized to act. External sources of leverage may also prove important. Strategic alliances and coalition-building with forces that can sanction those who engage in repression can help to raise its costs.<sup>102</sup> In Czechoslovakia, for example, Charter 77, a loose alliance of opposition groups, “used the Helsinki human rights process to strengthen its international contacts and raise the costs of domestic regime repression.”<sup>103</sup> Challengers are also likely to benefit from the mobilization of external actors that can impose sanctions. In Nepal, the nonviolent movement of 1989-1990 worked to exploit the government’s “dependence relations” abroad by mobilizing external donors to exert pressure of the regime.<sup>104</sup> Sanctions that affect individuals in the security forces are particularly likely to factor in to calculations of cost.

In order to galvanize internal and external parties to impose costs in response to repression, challengers must successfully convey acts of repression as significant events. Martin notes the important role of media coverage in generating backfire.<sup>105</sup> Others have successfully used the participation of political elites to raise the publicity associated with repression.<sup>106</sup> During demonstrations, crowd size is likely to matter in raising the

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Tarrow and Tilly as well as Osa and Schock highlight access to influential allies as key element of political opportunity structure. Tarrow and Tilly (2007) 57; Osa & Schock (2007) 131

<sup>103</sup> Smithey and Kurtz, “We Have Bare Hands,” In *Nonviolent Social Movements: A Geographical Perspective*, ed. Stephen Zunes, Lester Kurtz, and Sarah Beth Asher (Boston: Blackwell Publishing, 1999).

<sup>104</sup> Schock (2005) 137.

<sup>105</sup> Martin, (2007) 186.

<sup>106</sup> Mark Beissinger notes that in democratizing nations “competition among political elites provides opportunities for challengers to politicize acts of repression and to form alliances across groups to pressure elites and institutions carrying out repression.” Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 325.

stakes.<sup>107</sup> Sociologist Jennifer Earl also contributes an important distinction to the discussion by emphasizing that coercive repression must be observable in order to generate a public response, while “private” forms of repression that go unobserved “do not constitute a public relations concern for those committing them.”<sup>108</sup> Ackerman and Kruegler observe that in addition to domestic communication, “communications to the world outside the conflict are no less important, with images carried by print and broadcast media playing a key role in interpreting the conflict for outsiders and in motivating third party involvement.”<sup>109</sup> Schock has also linked favorable media coverage to third party support in the Philippines, South Africa, Nepal, and Thailand.<sup>110</sup>

Finally, avoiding pretexts for repression has also been cited as important in the literature on backfire. Stephan and Chenoweth found that among all campaigns where the regime attempted to violently repress a campaign, nonviolent campaigns were far more likely to achieve their objectives than violent campaigns. The authors concluded that this was because repression of a nonviolent campaign is more likely to mobilize domestic and external communities and thus elicit higher costs than the repression of a violent campaign.<sup>111</sup> Brian Martin writes that in order for backfire to occur, an attack must be

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<sup>107</sup> As Michael McFaul has noted, “a protest of ten thousand can be dispersed with tear gas and armored cars. A crowd of one million cannot.” McFaul (2005) 183.

<sup>108</sup> Jennifer Earl, “Tanks, Tear Gas, and Taxes: Toward a Theory of Movement Repression,” *Sociological Theory* 21, no. 1 (March 2003): 44-68. Earl cites Wisler and Guigni’s 1999 study of Swiss protests, which concluded that lower levels of protest coverage by local media outlets corresponded higher levels of police intervention and use of rubber bullets.

<sup>109</sup> Cited by Schock (2005) 169; Ackerman and Keuger, (1994) 31.

<sup>110</sup> Schock (2005) 170. He observes, however, that this factor is only relevant when the regimes have some degree of dependence on external actors, noting that in China, by contrast, international coverage of the pro-democracy movement had little effect on pressuring the regime due to the Chinese government’s relative independence.

<sup>111</sup> In their case study analysis, of East Timor and the Philippines, Stephan and Chenoweth found that repression backfired to produce mass mobilization, which in turn heightened the political costs of regime repression. In the Philippines, Aquino’s 1983 assassination was a rallying point for popular mobilization, and in East Timor, when Indonesian troops fired on East Timorese marching in a peaceful funeral

“seen to be unjust or, more generally, a violation of a widely held norm.”<sup>112</sup> Citing Barrington Moore’s *Injustice*, he observes that violence perceived as arbitrary – and thus unjust – is more likely to trigger a backfire response.<sup>113</sup> It thus follows for the practitioner that maintaining nonviolent discipline removes convenient pretexts for repression, as does avoiding overtly antagonistic behavior.<sup>114</sup> For this reason, strategists in the field have long argued that nonviolent methods offer strategic advantage under asymmetric conditions by allowing activists to “oppose the opponent’s power, including his police and military, not with the weapons chosen by him, but by quite different means.”<sup>115</sup>

The higher the costs of repression, the less likely it is that individuals in the security forces will be willing to engage in it. Movements that are able to increase the costs of repression by mobilizing relevant ‘audiences’; avoiding pretexts for repression; and effectively communicating and framing acts of repression are more likely to be associated with security force loyalty shifts than those that do not implement these tactics.

#### ***Strategic Objective IV: Mitigate the Costs of Accommodation***

The fourth objective proposed in this study also draws from prospect theory’s insights that costs may be particularly salient during times of crisis. “Costs of

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procession, killing over 200 – 1991 Dili Massacre prompted new campaigns from within the East Timorese nonviolent resistance movement. Stephan and Chenoweth (2007).

<sup>112</sup> Brian Martin, “Iraq Attack Backfire,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, no. 16 (April 2004): 1577-1583.

<sup>113</sup> Moore writes that although senses of injustice may vary between societies and cultures, “every culture seems to have *some* definition of arbitrary cruelty on the part of those in authority.” Barrington Moore, *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt* (London: MacMillan, 1978). Cited in Martin (2007) 178.

<sup>114</sup> For example, workers during the East German uprising of June 1953 acknowledged “red lines” in their decision not to break into trade union headquarters. One demonstrator later explained: “There was no one about but we did not try to enter by force. If we had broken down the door, the Government would have been only too thankful for the pretext to take action against us.” Theodore Ebert, “Non-violent Resistance against Communist Regimes?” *Civilian Resistance as a National Defense*, ed. Adam Roberts (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969) 223.

<sup>115</sup> Sharp (1973) 453.

“accommodation” refer to the various costs that members of the security forces may incur as result of permitting – or assisting – challengers to continue along their desired course and pursue their objective.<sup>116</sup> Three different types of cost may be relevant: following categories: penalties imposed by the current regime, potential immediate harm inflicted by a challenger, and the longer-term costs that may result from regime change. The effects of each are likely to inhibit regime shifts. First, security force members who fear that they will be penalized by the incumbent regime for failing to obey orders to repress a challenger may be more likely to obey those orders. Second, security force members who fear physical harm at the hands of a challenger may be prompted to engage in repression, regardless of their beliefs about the legitimacy of the regime. Third, security force members concerned about their professional and personal costs should a challenger assume power may be particularly motivated to take steps to prevent that scenario.

Sensitivity to costs imposed by the current regime is particularly relevant in nondemocratic environments where attempts to address grievances may lead to severe punishment.<sup>117</sup> In these cases, as Joshua Tucker argues, individuals “choose not to take the steps necessary to do so because of the costs they will bear as individuals, and the regime continues to be able to abuse its power.”<sup>118</sup> Much that has been written about the costs to activists might also be applied to security forces. In their discussion of the rational calculations involved in civilians’ decisions to engage in protest, Karklins and Peterson highlight two major aspects of short-term costs that would-be activists might consider: “the fear of being sanctioned in one’s local environment, for instance at the

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<sup>116</sup> Note that this usage of the term varies that from Sharp, who refer to decisionmakers at the center of the regime who may not “agree with the resisters, but decide it is too costly to continue the fight”

<sup>117</sup> Levy (1994).

<sup>118</sup> Tucker (2007) 2.

university or the workplace” and “physical repression at the site of the demonstration” and argue that individuals consider the degree to which they might be protected from these costs when contemplating protest.<sup>119</sup> Karklins and Peterson posit that same concerns are likely to apply to members the regime considering defection.<sup>120</sup>

A second consideration is the potential for immediate harm if a challenger becomes violent. The psychological effects of the high stakes associated with self-defense have long been identified by military strategists as a factor to be considered. In the *Art of War*, for example, Sun Tzu cautions military leaders: “Open a road for the enemy to depart, show them a path for flight” and “if you besiege an army you must leave an outlet. Do not press an exhausted invader.”<sup>121</sup> Similarly, in the subsequent ‘Six Secret Teachings’ Sun Pin assures strategists that soldiers besieged by an enemy are “the most distressed troops in the world: if you employ them explosively you will be victorious.”<sup>122</sup> Instinctive self-preservation in response to a threatening situation may override any other calculations in the decision-making process.

Third, longer-term costs resulting from movement’s success in assuming power can also pose risks for individuals in uniform. It can place their personal and professional futures in doubt as new political leaders reform or make their own mark on security force organization and leadership. As prospect theory indicates, individuals are willing to engage in risky activities if they perceive a significant potential for losing goods or

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<sup>119</sup> Karklins and Petersen (1993) 590.

<sup>120</sup> Karklins and Petersen hypothesize “that the same dynamic behind the actions of individuals who compose the “mass” can be applied to the decision process for the individuals who compose the regime: both have needs for protection and prediction related to various assurance games played out versus the society as a whole, within one’s own social group and within referent groups. Karklins and Petersen (1993) 597.

<sup>121</sup> Sun Tzu (1986) 131; and Ralph Sawyer, *The Essence of War* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2004) 285.

<sup>122</sup> Sawyer (2004) 285. (*Six Secret Teachings*, 33).

services they currently possess.<sup>123</sup> During the 1980-81 Solidarity crisis in Poland, for example, mounting threats to the military establishment severely eroded earlier support for Solidarity's goals and bolstered support from within the ranks for a military declaration of martial law.<sup>124</sup> Soldiers and policemen are more likely to remain loyal to a regime if they feel it is their only option for personal or professional survival, even if it means risking the potential costs of repression. The personal stakes associated with regime change may help to explain the order in which officials cascade towards disloyalty: Karklins and Peterson hypothesize a typical order with "officials 'tipping' first, followed by army and police, security police, and finally the regime elite itself."<sup>125</sup> For individuals who believe their fates to be tied closely to that of the regime core, a zero sum game develops in which gains by the movement translate into significant potential costs for them. Thus, writes Helvey, "the perception of military leaders that there will be an important role for them under a democratic government" can "play a significant role in limiting the military's destructive power."<sup>126</sup>

Strategic Objective IV poses special challenge to movement strategists. A movement has scant control over the penalties that a regime may mete out to disloyal members of its security forces. The nature of the regime, cultural norms, and relevant legal constraints are likely to play a larger role in dictating these costs than any strategy pursued by the movement itself. Punishment inflicted by a violent dictatorship may well be harsher than that imposed by a semi-authoritarian regime dependent on the trappings of legitimacy.

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<sup>123</sup> Levy (1994).

<sup>124</sup> Once the Soviet military threatened to interfere, undermining the Polish military's position, officers received broad popular support from within the ranks for the imposition of martial law. Elizabeth Coughlan, "Polish Peculiarities? Military Loyalty during the 1980-1981 Solidarity Crisis," *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies* no. 1401 (October 1999).

<sup>125</sup> However, Karklins and Petersen write that "data on regime groups are insufficient to assess the empirical fit of our theory in detail." Karklins and Petersen (1993) 598.

<sup>126</sup> Robert Helvey (2005) 12.

Beyond attempting to create channels for disloyalty that may escape detection, there may be little that a movement itself can do to alter this often-significant factor in the rational calculations made by members of the security forces.

However, a challenger can certainly influence the degree to which members of the security forces feel threatened by its own actions. Challengers that refrain from threatening soldiers are likely to induce more loyalty shifts than those who do threaten them. Ackerman and Kruegler have asserted that “key to any plans for undermining the willingness of the Army to commit to force against protestors is to convince them that their own lives and the lives of their families are not threatened.”<sup>127</sup> The reverse has also been noted. Doug McAdam points out that movements employing confrontational or threatening tactics are likely to provoke more significant levels of repression.<sup>128</sup> Sharp similarly proposes a theoretical distinction between security force behavior during violent and nonviolent struggles:

“Nonviolent actionists may try to destroy the opponent’s army as an effective force of repression by inducing deliberate inefficiency and open mutiny among the soldiers, without whom there can be no army. In contrast, military actionists would usually fight that army intact and attempt to defeat it by destroying its weapons and killing its soldiers. Such attacks on them would usually reinforce, not disrupt or destroy, their obedience patterns.”<sup>129</sup>

Commitment to nonviolent discipline alone is certainly not sufficient for influencing loyalties. However, by eliminating the potentially high costs associated with failure to

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<sup>127</sup> Ackerman and Kuegler (1994) 11. Ackerman and Kuegler note that although there was significant “revolutionary potential” within the military during the first Russian revolution, a December 1905 armed uprising ultimately mobilized previously reluctant soldiers to engage in harsh repressive measures against revolutionaries. Ackerman and Kuegler (1994) 194.

<sup>128</sup> Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgencies, 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). Cited in Earl (2003).

<sup>129</sup> Sharp (1973) 453.

defeat a violent opponent, commitment to nonviolent tactics may play an important role in creating an environment conducive to loyalty shifts.

Finally, the way that a movement frames a post-transition scenario may also have an impact on the perceived costs of disloyalty for some members of the security forces. As Robert Helvey observes, “the perception of military leaders that there will be an important role for them under a democratic government” can “play a significant role in limiting the military’s destructive power.”<sup>130</sup> Sharp similarly argues that assurances about career continuity are likely to correspond to loyalty shifts.<sup>131</sup> Comparative political scientists have found that transitions to more pluralistic systems appear most likely when some former regime elites retain their positions and “former wielders of state coercion... obtain amnesty from punishment for human rights violations”<sup>132</sup> However, question of whether or not to suspend sanctions against those who have committed grave human rights abuses is justifiably controversial. Amnesty negotiations may significantly alter the calculations made by those fearing post-regime change reprisals.<sup>133</sup> However, failure to prosecute former regime criminals may well undermine the very democratic practices that a movement is working to achieve. And, arguably, it may ultimately be unnecessary. The case study of Serbia, in particular, will examine this issue at greater length.

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<sup>130</sup> Helvey (2004) 12.

<sup>131</sup> Sharp writes that “Loyalty to an authoritarian that is based on self-interest can be easily changed into support for the democratic movement. For example, civil servants will often switch their support to the nonviolent movement once they understand that corrupt bosses will be replaced and that their jobs won’t be jeopardized under a new democratic system.” Sharp (1973).

<sup>132</sup> Charles Andrain, *Comparative Political Systems: Policy Performance and Social Change* (New York: ME Sharpe, 1994) 138.

<sup>133</sup> Karklins and Petersen observe that the position of a regime’s secret police “is different from that of the regular army and police. They may not be able to avoid sanctions under a new regime” even if they avoid engaging in repression. Karklins and Petersen (1993) 597.

### ***Strategic Objective V: Demonstrate Likelihood of Success***

Momentum attracts. Demonstrating likelihood of success is the final critical objective proposed in this study. The perceived probability that a challenger will succeed in overturning a ruling regime plays a significant role in determining the relative costs of loyalty and disloyalty for members of the security forces. This objective interacts with the first four objectives. Perceptions of the relative legitimacy of the regime and movement may influence calculations about the regime's ability to maintain its grip on power.<sup>134</sup> Predictions about the likelihood of success have implications for calculations of relative costs of repression or accommodation: if the challenger is able to assume power, the costs of remaining loyal to the former regime are magnified. Alternatively if the challenger is unsuccessful, costs to sympathizers may be high.<sup>135</sup>

Features unique to this objective support its designation as a discrete category. Predictions about a challenger's likelihood of success have been identified by some analysts as the single most important dynamic influencing regime defections during the Colored Revolutions.<sup>136</sup> Karklins and Peterson, who highlight the dynamic, argue that, like civilians, "soldiers must try to predict the solution to their internal game. At the same

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<sup>134</sup> Osa and Schock note, for example, that "when more moderate elements of the population join the hardcore opposition, bystanders realize that the government is less legitimate than they had thought, and they may begin to protest as well." They cite S. Lohmann, "The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989-1991," *World Politics*, 47 (1994). Osa and Schock (2007) 137.

<sup>135</sup> Karklins and Petersen make this point "soldiers and police are involved in a similar calculus: 'not shooting' while the majority plays its 'shoot' option will involve court-martial or other severe sanction as the regime will probably survive under this contingency. On the other hand, 'shooting' while others opt for 'don't shoot' will entail equally severe sanctions imposed by a likely new regime. Karklins and Petersen (1993).

<sup>136</sup> David Black argues that in Ukraine: most significant: A critical mass of key actors, such as journalists, judges, police and hitherto regime supporters, came to the conclusion that the opposition was likely to, or at least had a very good chance of, assuming power, and thus took actions to support the opposition. See also, Tucker (2007).

time, the security police are doing likewise.”<sup>137</sup> Some security force behaviors can arguably only be understood through analysis of perceived calculations of probability and the dynamics of collective behavior, such as “collective action” problems or bandwagoning.

A “collective action” framework is applicable to those sympathetic to a challenger – who have been swayed by exposure of regime illegitimacy or by demonstrations of opposition legitimacy – but are unwilling to risk the potential costs of accommodation unless there is a reasonable probability of success. The collective action problem, widely discussed in literature on protest, springs from the observation that even when individuals value a shared objective --- for example, the ouster of an illegitimate regime – many are unlikely to act unless they have some assurance that their actions may result in victory.<sup>138</sup> Without such assurance, they may undervalue their own ability to positively affect the outcome.<sup>139</sup> While the collective action model is typically applied to popular mobilization, it can also help to explain why some sympathetic members of the security forces may not actively support the movement until later in the game.<sup>140</sup> Confidence in a challenger’s prospects for success may embolden would-be defectors.

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<sup>137</sup> According to the authors: “We...emphasize that perceptions of regime officials may be changing the most dramatically during the demonstration process itself. We hypothesize that the same dynamic behind the actions of individuals who compose the "mass" can be applied to the decision process for the individuals who compose the regime: both have needs for protection and prediction related to various assurance games played out versus the society as a whole, within one's own social group and within referent groups. Karklins and Petersen (1993) 597.

<sup>138</sup> Tucker (2007) 15.

<sup>139</sup> In their analysis of survey data from Hamburg and New York City, Meuller and Opp concluded that perceptions of participants influence on the outcome (and provision of public goods) was a significant factor in determining an individual’s decision to participate in protests. Muller and Opp (1986). Karklins and Petersen also link agency to action, writing that individuals “prefer to participate in activity that might possibly bring about some meaningful change and are looking for clues and assurances that other social groups may join the protests and that the regime is weakening.” Karklins and Petersen (1993), 590.

<sup>140</sup> David Black offers an important distinction by highlighting the “assumption of power” as the outcome most relevant to collective action problems during the colored revolutions. Black, (2005) 5.

A related dynamic, bandwagoning, may also occur, as security force members who are neutral or who support the status quo begin to defect as the evidence mounts that the challenger may assume power.<sup>141</sup> In the dynamic of bandwagoning, actors make a utilitarian calculus to join a stronger coalition rather than engage in balancing behaviors.<sup>142</sup> As D’Aneiri notes, each new participant to a challenger movement “increases the chance that someone with a higher threshold of participation will join.”<sup>143</sup> The bandwagoning dynamic may thus be considered particularly relevant for security force members with “higher thresholds” for dissent – those whose private preferences favor maintaining the status quo over an opposition victory.<sup>144</sup>

As they consider the challenger’s likelihood of assuming power, individuals in uniform are looking at a variety of indicators. Karklins and Petersen cite two primary reference sources for regime members making calculations about a challenger’s likelihood of success – the challenger and colleagues within their own ranks. As challenger’s perceived strength increases, they observe, “groups within the regime are using signals emanating from the mass to become "deassured" of the regime's ability to survive.”<sup>145</sup>

Simultaneously, they are also examining their own ranks, using internal “referent

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<sup>141</sup> In international relations theory, “bandwagoning” refers to behaviors alignment with a stronger state, or source of danger, as contrasted to balancing behavior. Pfaltzgraff and Dougherty (2001) 537. This phenomenon noted in the context of political protest in: Rasler (1996).

<sup>142</sup> Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (2001) 537.

<sup>143</sup> Paul D’Aneiri also points out that the reverse is true: when skepticism rises, more protestors quit – which he offers as an explanation for the failed movements in Serbia in 1996-1997 and in Ukraine in 2001.

<sup>144</sup> Timur Kurian, “Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989,” *World Politics* 44, no. 1 (October 1991): 7-48.

<sup>145</sup> Earl similarly observes that challengers “presumed to be more likely to succumb to repression” are more likely to experience such repression than those perceived as strong and therefore likely to succeed. She argues that weak movements with more radical, threatening positions are most likely to experience repression, hypothesizing that “movement weakness is positively associated with observable, coercive repression by state agents. Earl (2003) 53; Karklins and Petersen also write that within the groups of protestors “social groups of the mass are becoming assured of protection versus sanction and upgrading the possibilities of regime change.” Karklins and Petersen (1993).

groups” to determine relative loyalties, unity, and, consequently, probability of regime success.<sup>146</sup> Perceived challenger strength and regime weakness are fluid dynamics, and mutually reinforcing. As a movement grows stronger, individuals in uniform begin to have doubts about others’ loyalty, and thus the unity of their own ranks.<sup>147</sup> Helvev similarly links perceived movement strength to calculations about the positions of other “pillars of support.”<sup>148</sup> Conversely, weakness or disunity in the ranks may reassure demonstrators that they are less likely to face repression, encouraging more to join.<sup>149</sup> Thus, as Mark Katz that “the entire army does not have to defect to the opposition in order for revolution to succeed. A partial defection can have a cascading effect. Just the refusal of the armed forces to fire upon the opposition for whatever reason may assure its victory.”<sup>150</sup>

Tactics in pursuit of Strategic Objective V thus address reference points both within the movement and the regime. While the dynamics of the cascading confidence levels

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<sup>146</sup> Karklins and Petersen also note that as the numbers of actors in a society – and within the security forces – exhibiting disloyalty grows, so does the “protection” from retribution, as potential costs are more widely dispersed, prompting members of the security forces to carefully observe the progress of the movement and the positions taken by their peers in uniform. Karklins and Petersen (1993). Paul D’Anieri has also written about role of mass mobilization in lowering the anticipated cost of protest within the context of the Colored Revolutions, arguing that elite support makes it easier for protests to reach the necessary “tipping point.” D’Aneiri (2006) 348.

<sup>147</sup> Karklins and Petersen write that when crowds include not only “students but workers...soldiers will recalculate the chances of other soldiers firing upon the crowd. In turn, the regime elite will need to recalculate its ability to rely on the soldiers under these new conditions.” Karklins and Petersen (1993).

<sup>148</sup> Helvey writes: “If you get 500,000 people out on the street...it generates a perception nationwide of the growing strength of the organization and it could improve recruitment and support. It could cause these other pillars of support to start a reevaluation of their position with respect to the regime.” Bob Helvey, cited in “How Did We Succeed? Superior Propaganda for Advertising Freedom” Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies, 2004 (Online at [http://www.canvasopedia.org/content/serbian\\_case/otpor\\_propaganda.htm#06](http://www.canvasopedia.org/content/serbian_case/otpor_propaganda.htm#06))

<sup>149</sup> Paul D’Aneiri offers thoughtful discussion of the role of societal “tipping points” in his article on the Colored Revolutions, arguing that security elites play a pivotal role in determining such tipping points and noting that “we can see from some cases how security services could make it very difficult for protests to reach threshold size.” However, D’Aneiri does not consider the impact of a moment’s momentum upon the security forces themselves. D’Aneiri (2006).

<sup>150</sup> Mark Katz “Will there be revolution in Central Asia?” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 40 (2007) 129.

admittedly make Strategic Objective V difficult to assess, a few efforts by challenger groups might arguably strengthen their hand.

First, the perceived degree of unity within the challenger group may influence perceptions about its likelihood of success. Unity of opposition has been used in scholarship on civil resistance as one of the key indicators of the relative strength of a challenger movement.<sup>151</sup> Challenger unity is also cited by Michael McFaul as among his “preconditions” for successful nonviolent revolution.<sup>152</sup> Without a cohesive, viable alternative to the status quo, members of the security forces are unlikely to take risks in favor of change.

Second, the geographic and social scope of a movement also influences perceptions of its strength and likelihood of success. Challenger groups that include participants from a variety of geographic regions, professions and social classes are more likely to be perceived as potentially successful than those that draw from a limited pool of dissidents.<sup>153</sup> “Cross cutting alliances” and broad-based composition have long been cited as indicators of the potential success of regime challengers. Within the context of violent revolution, theorist Thomas Greene observes that “one obvious common denominator that cuts across all successful revolutionary movements” is the “extent to which the active minorities of other social classes” take part in the struggle.<sup>154</sup> Karklins and Peterson similarly emphasize the significance of movement composition, concluding that in majority

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<sup>151</sup> Ackerman and Karatnycky (2005) cite “lack of unity represented by multiple groupings rather than a single broad-based coalition” as a factor weakening nonviolent movements.

<sup>152</sup> McFaul (2005); Opposition unity has also been outlined by Paul D’Aneiri as a significant difference between failed and successful movements in both Serbia and Ukraine. D’Aneiri (2006).

<sup>153</sup> Earl (2003) 53. Earl assess movement strength and weakness, including mobilization levels and minority group membership in the movement.

<sup>154</sup> Revolutions, Greene argues, “do not succeed where only the workers are mobilized, or only the peasants, or only the middle classes. They succeed only where a critical mass of most or all of the major classes in the society is mobilized in the revolutionary process.” Greene (1974).

of cases they studied, the “timing of regime violence came when students were consolidating their protest and before many workers were involved,” and note that as increasing elements of society participate in protest events, “regime officials upgrade the probabilities of regime collapse.”<sup>155</sup>

A broad geographic and social scope may also contribute to perceived likelihood of success by increasing the points of resistance available to a challenger – diminishing the regime’s capacity for effective repression and increasing the possibility that regime change will eventually be perceived as inevitable. Clearly, the size and scope of a regime’s security forces are outside of a challenger’s control. However, tactical use of concentration and dispersion may help to create localized asymmetries that alter calculations about likelihood of success.<sup>156</sup> Under the appropriate conditions, methods of concentration – for example a million demonstrators in a capital – can create relative advantages that may boost perceptions about likelihood of success.<sup>157</sup> Dispersion of tactics can undermine a regime’s ability to respond, diminishing its control.<sup>158</sup> In his discussion of mobilization cycles, Mark Beissinger observes that “demobilization through repression...is generally easier to

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<sup>155</sup>Karklins and Petersen highlight the concept of a “tipping point” based on the composition of and perceived fearlessness of demonstrators: “The basis for these predictions, or changes in perception, probably lie in the same cues for action used by the demonstrators. When the society as a whole has reached the tipping point and is demonstrating day after day without individual fear of physical sanctions, regime officials upgrade the probabilities of regime collapse.” Karklins and Petersen (1993) 17. David Black applies the concept to the case of Ukraine in 2004 in his 2005 masters thesis, “The Tipping Point in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution.”

<sup>156</sup>Sun Tzu writes, for example, that “if I determine the enemy’s disposition of forces while I have no perceptible form, I can concentrate my forces while the enemy is fragmented. If we are concentrated into a single force while he is fragmented into ten, then we attack him with ten times his strength.” Sawyer (1996) 69.

<sup>157</sup>Schock particularly cites coherence of the political elite and security forces, as well as a state’s willingness to use decisive repression, as factors contributing to decisions to use concentration vs dispersion. Schock (2005) 169.

<sup>158</sup>Schock (2005) 52 and 167 Schock cites Ackerman and Kruegler, who write that “in almost all cases, wide dispersion of nonviolent sanctions, both geographically and throughout the social and political environment... compromise the opponent’s ability to respond and diminish their overall control” Ackerman and Krueglerr (1994) 37.

accomplish prior to the emergence of a mobilizational cycle (that is, before multiple, interrelated challenges have developed).<sup>159</sup> Scholars focusing on structural factors have noted that forces that are spread thin may be less capable of imposing sanctions – conscious attempts by nonviolent strategists to disperse broadly may help to generate these conditions.<sup>160</sup>

Finally, the degree of unity within their own forces – across ranks and between institutions – is also likely to factor into security force calculations about a challenger's prospects for success.<sup>161</sup> In one study of military loyalty in communist contexts, the authors found that “without a relatively unified armed force it will be less likely that the military, or any part of it, will defend the power of the party.”<sup>162</sup> Strategists as ancient as Sun Tzu have observed that only forces “whose upper and lower ranks have the same desires will be victorious.”<sup>163</sup> Recognizing this indicator, nonviolent challengers might attempt to identify and widen existing cleavages within the ranks of security forces. This tactic has already been cited as a source of potential power by negotiation theorists Rubin and Salacuse, who suggest identifying potential “lines of cleavage within the ranks of the adversary. Having identified such divisions, it must then develop a strategy to exploit them.”<sup>164</sup>

As a challenger attempts to increase its perceived likelihood of success, therefore, it may

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<sup>159</sup> Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State: A Tidal Approach to the Study of Nationalism*, (Cambridge University Press, 2002) 325.

<sup>160</sup> Dahl notes that the size and density of security force are significant in determining the ability of a government to use violence against opponents Dahl (1971) 49. Indeed, Mark Beissinger has highlighted poorly armed Soviet police and army troops were “practically powerless” against nationalist unrest sweeping the USSR in 1989 as a factor in undermining morale and loyalty. Beissinger (2002) 372.

<sup>161</sup> McFaul (2005).

<sup>162</sup> With this in mind, they note, “Deng Xiaoping went to great lengths to ensure that he had a reasonably united PLA before he actually tested it in “battle” against the people” at Tiananmen Square. (Segal and Gerald Segal and John Phipps, ‘Why communist armies fight for their parties’, *Asian Survey* (Oct. 1990) 967

<sup>163</sup> Sun Tzu. Sawyer, Ralph, trans. *The Complete Art of War*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996) 52

<sup>164</sup> Rubin and Salacuse suggest that a weaker party might achieve this through “strategic disruption, achieved by attempting to stir things up within the ranks of the other side, inducing internal dissension” J.Z. Rubin and J.W. Salacuse, “The Problem of Power in Negotiation,” *International Affairs* (April 1990) 31.

endeavor to increase its own perceived strength through unity and a broad scope of mobilization, and to decrease the regime's perceived prospects of survival by exploiting existing cleavages within its ranks.

### **Summary: Five Strategic Objectives**

This study proposes that challengers able to achieve the five objectives laid out in this chapter are more likely to achieve security force loyalty shifts than those who do not. To summarize these include:

- **Strategic Objective I: Expose regime illegitimacy:** by exploiting regime blunders and by communicating distinctions between loyalty to country and regime;
- **Strategic Objective II: Establish challenger legitimacy:** by reaching out to security forces' communities, by seeking certification of influential allies, by explicitly committing to nonviolent practices, and by garnering diverse appeal;
- **Strategic Objective III: Raise the costs of repression:** by identifying communities and external actors able to impose sanctions, by communicating effectively about incidents of repression, and by avoiding potential pretexts for repression;
- **Strategic Objective IV: Mitigate costs of accommodation:** by addressing short term concerns about personal safety and long term concerns about professional security;
- **Strategic Objective V: Demonstrate likelihood of success:** by exhibiting internal unity, building active participation of broad-based alliances, creating localized asymmetries, and exploiting security force cleavages.

Analysis of the cases examined in this study is organized along the five strategic objectives proposed in Chapter 1. Through close examination of protest episodes in Serbia and Ukraine, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 will assess the degree to which each strategic objective was relevant to security force behaviors, and evaluate the relative

impact of strategies employed by challenger groups to elicit security force loyalty shifts. After tracing and assessing the strategies and behaviors observed in these cases, Chapter 4 also considers the broader applicability of these strategic objectives by corroborating observations in Serbia and Ukraine with those from failed and successful episodes of protest in Georgia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. The concluding chapter offers observations about the implications of each strategic objective for external actors assisting unarmed insurrections.

## **CHAPTER TWO: SERBIA**

### **Introduction**

On Thursday October 5, 2000, hundreds of thousands of Serbian citizens came to Belgrade. They traveled south from Novi Sad and northern Vojvodina, east from Pancevo and Vrsac and west from Loznica and Sabac, up from Nis, Paracin, Krusevac, and Kraljevo, and along the Ibar highway from Cacak, Uzice, and Valjevo. They converged upon the city on foot, in cars, in buses, and atop the bulldozers that were soon to become one of the symbols of their victory.

The events of October 5<sup>th</sup> have been chronicled by numerous journalists, scholars, and filmmakers.<sup>1</sup> Most of those cite security force defections as central to the relatively bloodless outcome of the events.<sup>2</sup> Victories achieved on October 5<sup>th</sup> have since been painted in triumphalist terms. In reality, however, success was far from assured. Serbian security forces under the Milosevic regime had failed to shift loyalties to challengers in the past, and the history of 1990s protests in Serbia offered plenty of examples of crackdowns and repression. By 2000, Milosevic clearly relied upon his security forces to maintain power, and was willing to use violence to suppress potential challengers, as evidenced by not-infrequent assassination attempts, sometimes successful, on opposition leaders and defectors.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In particular see, *Bringing Down a Dictator*, “The Fall of Milosevic: The October 5<sup>th</sup> Revolution,” “Removing the Dictator in Serbia 1996-2000” In Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle* (Porter Sargent, Boston: 2005) 315

<sup>2</sup> The strongest case for point this is made in Paul D’Aneiri (2006).

<sup>3</sup> For example, note the assassination attempts on opposition politician Vuk Draskovic in October 1999 and again in June 2000, and the assassination of former Serbian president Ivan Stambolic in August 2000.

Even in 2000, security institutions exhibited a variety of behaviors and decisions that did not clearly indicate whether loyalty shifts would occur. This chapter examines the behaviors within three major security institutions: the Interior Ministry – including local police forces in Belgrade and elsewhere and Interior Ministry’s Special Anti-terrorist Unit (SAJ); the Yugoslav Army (VJ); and the state intelligence service Sluzba Drzavne Bezbednosti (SDB), including the SDB’s notorious “unit for special operations” (JSO). After assessing the responses during the protests within each security institution, the chapter then considers how the five strategic objectives proposed in Chapter 1 were fulfilled and the degree to which they had an impact on members of the Serbian security forces.

Two additional episodes of political protest in Serbia covered in Chapter Two – March 1991 and December 1996 through March 1997 – are also examined to shed light on the wide range of possible security force behaviors and challenger strategies. Chapter Two Section 2 discusses the continuity of loyalty in response to the 1991 protests, as displayed through the mobilization of military tanks in Belgrade and robust police repression. The third section of this chapter examines mixed loyalty outcomes during the 1996/1997 student protests as most members of the security forces remained loyal, though some reportedly engaged in foot-dragging and low-grade subversion.

Analysis of the three episodes reveals the significant extent to which the actions and strategies of challengers influenced security force loyalties. Each episode also offers variation in the degree to which challengers were able to meet the five strategic objectives. In 2000, all five strategic objectives were met by the opposition, and each appears to have played a role in eliciting security force loyalty shifts. However, none of

the five strategic objectives were met during the events of March 1991. Some were partially met during 1996-1997 demonstrations. As challengers developed lessons from previous protests over the course of the decade, they were able to strengthen their ability to meet the five strategic objectives, and thus to influence decisions and behaviors of the “guys with guns.”

## **Security Forces: Background**

### ***Interior Ministry***

By October 2000, Serbia’s public security forces consisted of about 150,000 members nationwide, or one police officer for every 70 citizens.<sup>4</sup> The highly centralized force included 300 police stations throughout the country, organized into 156 municipalities and about 33 secretariats, all reporting to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Belgrade.<sup>5</sup>

Starting in the mid-1990s, the Serbian police had become increasingly militarized as the regime emphasized new roles in repressing internal dissent and regional combat.<sup>6</sup> Significant financial investment in the police yielded new vehicles, uniforms, and weapons. Updated firearms and military training junior officers received at the national police academy reflected an increasing focus on paramilitary missions.<sup>7</sup> Public police

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<sup>4</sup> Budimir Babovic, “Police as a Tool of Milosevic’s Autocratic Rule” *Triangle of the State Power Army, Police, Paramilitary Units* (Helsinki files, Belgrade, 2001) 95. According to Babovic, the European average is 1:300.

<sup>5</sup> Senior police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia. Telephone interview. August 26, 2008

<sup>6</sup> The 1995 ‘Law on Ranks’ created a ranking system within the police that paralleled the military structure, immediately promoting over a dozen officers to the rank of Police General, offering them the same status as their military counterparts, a point noted with particular frustration by military interviewees. Babovic observes that the number of police officers promoted to general was “more than the total number of police ranks conferred in the former Yugoslavia throughout the fifty or so years of its life” Babovic (2001)

<sup>7</sup> Babovic describes the weapons issues to police officers as including “light machine guns, mortars, light anti-armor weapons and rocket launchers, hand-grenades, rifle-grenades and other grenades, and special

officers were also increasingly assigned to special police units known as “Posebne Jedinice Policije” or PJP. Armed with mortars and machine guns, these units were frequently deployed to quell protests inside Serbia or to fight in Kosovo.<sup>8</sup> Over the course of the decade, as the Milosevic regime attempted to expand the capacity of the police, greater numbers of local police officers were drawn into PJP squads, according to one senior police official, creating a “double structure” that maximized resources but left individuals overburdened.<sup>9</sup> The structure of the special units lead to considerable ambiguity about their actual size. Estimates on the total number of PJP forces varied in 1999 between 5,000 and 13,000.<sup>10</sup>

Officers’ personal and professional interests identified with the Milosevic regime more closely as they ascended up the ranks. A core group of officials within the top management maintained close ties with SPS, Milosevic’s ruling party. One retired police officer later recalled that “the most significant players – maybe 300-500 within police oligarchy – were completely connected to the regime and were abusing the manpower within the police force.”<sup>11</sup> Interior Minister Vlajko Stojiljkovic, a close Milosevic ally,

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weapons mounted on or built into special vehicle, while special police received submachine guns and light machine guns.” Babovic (2001).

<sup>8</sup> Fred Abrahams, *Under Orders: War Crimes in Kosovo* (Human Rights Watch, 2001) 78.

<sup>9</sup> As the official recalls, when a protest occurred, officers “would be pulled out from police stations, go to their preassigned squads, and leave their normal job to cover the protest. This gave impression that there were extra police forces, but it was just double organization.” For example when protest in Belgrade occurred, an order would be sent to a certain area in Serbia to sent one company, one squad to Belgrade. This structure is very important to new role of police.” Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia. Personal interview. August 20, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Abrahams (2001) notes the ambiguity surrounding their size, writing that “according to the Federation of American Scientists and a leading Belgrade police analyst, the PJP had an estimated 7,000 men, although their numbers could be quickly expanded by recruiting from the regular police. The U.K. Ministry of Defense, however, claimed that the PJP had 5,000 members in 1999 divided into six detachments in Serbia, as well as 8,000 reservists.”

<sup>11</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.) Republic of Serbia. Personal interview, August 20, 2006. Director of the Belgrade Center for Civil-Military Relations Miroslav Hadzic made a similar observation that high ranking officers in police and military institutions had increasingly become a “vehicle through which they perpetuated their own interests,” and noted that “they felt threatened... if there was a shift in

allegedly sent out written orders to assassinate identified civil society organizers.<sup>12</sup> Chief of Police Obrad Stevanovic, who was active in the police forces for all three of the cases studied, acknowledges that by the mid-1990s, the Serbian police forces were “under political influence.”<sup>13</sup>

Further down the ranks, as the intensity of PJP deployments amplified, more junior officers, exhausted from deployments to Kosovo and deployments across Serbia to suppress opposition activities, became increasingly dissatisfied with the status quo.<sup>14</sup> According to one interviewee from within the Interior Ministry, a Ministry commission conducted research at the end of 1999 to measure the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder in the Serbian police forces. The interviewee said that the results were “devastating. Ninety percent of police forces were suffering from PTSD. The conclusion of the Ministry was that it was that it was so widely present, that it was no use to deal with this problem.”<sup>15</sup> Another policeman commented succinctly on the Milosevic era: “We lived poorly.”<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, in a crumbling economy, few could afford to risk losing their jobs.

In addition to PJPs, the Interior Ministry also had access to special antiterrorist units (Specijalna Antiteroristicka Jedinica, or SAJ), reported to be the “fittest and the most loyal” of officers by British government analysts in 1999.<sup>17</sup> Heavily engaged in the

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power, there might be a change in the top management.” Hadzic, Miroslav. Personal interview. August 28, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.) Republic of Serbia. Personal interview, August 20, 2006. The alleged orders went unheeded.

<sup>13</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Senior police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia. Telephone interview. August 26, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Senior police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia. Telephone interview. August 26, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.) Republic of Serbia. Personal interview, August 20, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> “Report on the Serbian Ministry of the Interior and State Security Service” Ministry of Defence, United Kingdom. Presentation by Julian Moir, 1 April 1999. Online at: <http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/Kosovo/Kosovo-General1.html>

Kosovo conflict, these units included about 400 men.<sup>18</sup> However, even within this force, some questions existed about loyalties. On September 27<sup>th</sup> 2000, three days after the elections and amidst increasing regime paranoia, the chief of SAJ was removed from his position after he reportedly proposed that Milosevic meet with Kostunica.<sup>19</sup> He was replaced by Curcic Branko, a former deputy commander of the state security's special operations unit.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Ministry of Defense***

Long a source of popular pride, Serbia's military was considerably weakened during the 1990s as Milosevic used the army during the Balkan conflicts and shifted resources towards the Interior Ministry. Engagement in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo had taken a toll on the organization's resources and morale. Compounding the issue were drastic cuts in the military budget, leading to a decline, for example, from US\$5 to billion US\$1 billion between 1996 and 1997.<sup>21</sup> The officer corps had become, with some exceptions nearly exclusively Serb. Traditionally, under the banner of "unity and brotherhood," the multiethnic Yugoslav People's Army had represented a Titoist ideal of Yugoslav cohesion. In 1992, however, as war with Croatia intensified, the army was purged of its Croat and Slovenian officers and renamed the *Vojska Jugoslavia* (VJ).<sup>22</sup>

Over the course of the decade, an institution that had once prided itself on professionalism became increasingly politicized within the higher ranks. During the

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>19</sup> Colonel Vulevic Spasoje. Personal interview. May 12. 2008. The officer was SAJ head Zivko Trajkovic.

<sup>20</sup> Colonel Vulevic Spasoje. Personal interview. May 12. 2008.

<sup>21</sup> The military was weakened in part because of the implementation of international sanctions prohibiting the sale or delivery of weapons "Serbia: Ministry of Defense." GlobalSecurity.org, accessed 1/27/09 at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/serbia/mod.htm>

<sup>22</sup> The army had previously been named the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA)

spring of 1992, Milosevic initiated an extensive purge of the military leadership, retiring 170 generals and admirals by August 1993, leaving only seven on active duty.<sup>23</sup> At the close of the 1990s, Milosevic continued to replace those generals whose loyalty was in doubt. In 1998, he fired Chief of Staff General Momcilo Perisic after Perisic criticized Milosevic's policies in Kosovo.<sup>24</sup> After his removal from office, Perisic established a small opposition party, and, along with another retired general, Vuk Obradovic, would become an important player in the political opposition's strategy for military outreach.

By 2000, the VJ's highest-ranking officers had been hand-picked by Milosevic. Loyalist Gen. Dragolub Ojdanic, who initially replaced Perisic, was promoted to Minister of Defense in 2000 and was serving in that position during October 5<sup>th</sup>. General Nebojsa Pavkovic, who had familial connections with Milosevic's wife Mira, and who had led the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army in Kosovo following a meteoric rise from the rank of colonel in 1998, was appointed Chief of Staff. Beneath him, General Bozidar Delic who had served with Pavkovic in Kosovo and also had strong ties to the Milosevic family, was appointed as the commanding chief of Belgrade corps.

Opposition leaders felt relatively confident that the majority of conscripted soldiers would balk at orders to shoot civilians.<sup>25</sup> As of 1997, however, only 40% of the VJ's 114,000 troops were conscripts.<sup>26</sup> There was considerable concern about decision-making and the potential willingness to use force at the higher echelons of the organization. During the run up to October 5<sup>th</sup>, challengers recognized that, in the words of one

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<sup>23</sup> Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy - Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, (Washington, D.C: The Brookings Institution, 1995) 256.

<sup>24</sup> About eighteen months earlier, during the 1996/1997 student protests, Perisic declared army would not be used against the unarmed civilians.

<sup>25</sup> Democratic Opposition of Serbia official (former). Personal Interview. January 21, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Serbia: Ministry of defense. *GlobalSecurity.org*. Retrieved January 27, 2009 from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world-serbia/mod.htm>

opposition politician: “the positions in military were divided. Most said that they would never shoot at people, but there were also significant individuals at the top of hierarchy who were available for immediate use of force.”<sup>27</sup>

During the elections, the General Staff ordered the “special operations battalion-companies of the “72<sup>nd</sup> Special Brigade, 63<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade, 56<sup>th</sup> Combined, and elements of the Military Police” to be kept in a state of readiness “to be deployed within 30 minutes.”<sup>28</sup> Military units would remain deployed through October 5<sup>th</sup>. After the elections, in the days prior to October 5<sup>th</sup>, General Nebojsa Pavkovic had called for the deployment of VJ special units to Belgrade, citing what he argued was a likelihood of opposition attacks against military buildings.<sup>29</sup> In order to protect against this contingency, Pavkovic argued, VJ units would have to be “set up, formed into ranks, ready to act. [With]only a signal... the unit is on their way. We know who can sound the alarm for them, and who is here - we have to protect the interest of the Army.”<sup>30</sup> Statements such as these imply that opposition concerns about some VJ elements were not unfounded.

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<sup>27</sup> Zoran Zivkovic, Email correspondence. April 30, 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Vladan Vlajkovic, *Military Secret (Part I)* (Belgrade: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2004) 63.

<sup>29</sup> General Pavkovic declared in mid-2000, for example, that he estimated that “those from Otpor, the mercenaries, not the students, of course...would try to attack some of the buildings, as an attempt to get hold of weapons, or only to provoke us in some way. I'm almost sure of that. So, that should be examined on the army level, on the general staff level, our buildings that should be protected and units that should be tasked with securing them. Well, we cannot allow that somebody attacks that building of our General Staff in the centre, and that we do not have a unit that has been tasked with protecting it and intervening in such situations. And to gather our forces only after such incidents, only after something happens that makes us gather our units...” Vlajkovic (2004) 232.

<sup>30</sup> In mid-2000, Pavkovic had further declared that a military team should be created to “practically coordinate all those activities with the commands of one and the other Army, both in the units made up in Belgrade and of course, deeper in the territory. Well we cannot allow that somebody attacks that building of our General Staff in the centre, and that we do not have a unit that has been tasked with protecting it and intervening in such situations. And to gather our forces only after such incidents, only after something happens that makes us gather our units. Vlajkovic (2004) 232.

## ***State Security***

During the 1990s, the state intelligence service, *Sluzba Drzavne Bezbednosti* (the SDB) played an active role in working to subvert potential challenges to Slobodan Milosevic's rule. Coordinated by SDB head Jovic Stanisic, security agents worked to infiltrate opposition political parties, student groups and other potential challengers to the regime, in order to exploit divisions, exert influence on decision-making, and gather information.<sup>31</sup>

When, in 1998, Stanisic was fired and replaced with loyalist Rade Markovic, many mid-level officers within the service became increasingly disenchanted.<sup>32</sup> However, a core group of high-level officers remained close to Markovic and the regime. Opposition leaders recall that "representatives of [SDB] were the most difficult for cooperation and it was very hard to work with them. All representatives who belonged to the top of state security forces were absolutely ready to do anything in order to help Milosevic maintain his power."<sup>33</sup> A former SDB official corroborated the statement, recalling that "Markovic's inner circle wouldn't approve [of contacts] because they were too short sighted and I think too radical – too willing to express total obedience...paranoia was at a maximum."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Zoran Kusovac, "Serbia's inadequate opposition." *Janes*. Retrieved at Media Club from <http://www.mediaclub.cg.yu/eng/articles/2000/august/01.htm> The article notes that SDB officers were actively "infiltrating these special agents university and all the gathering places of people that were potentially politically dangerous in crisis situations. Their intent was not only gather information, but also focus the crowd in a direction that the regime could control." Their active efforts to subvert the opposition were corroborated by a retired SDB officer interviewed in Belgrade in March 2008. SDB official (ret.). Personal interview. April 7, 2008.

<sup>32</sup> The SDB officer reported that he and his colleagues in state security were "very disappointed with how the system was functioning" by the late 1990s. SDB official (ret.). Personal interview. April 7, 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Zoran Zivkovic, Email correspondence. April 30, 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Senior official, SDB (former). Personal interview. April 7, 2008.

The unit of most concern to the challengers and those sympathetic to their cause was the SDB's infamous Unit for Special Operations (JSO) known colloquially as the "Red Berets."<sup>35</sup> It was made up of between 300 and 500 individuals and heavily armed. Led by Milorad "Legija" Ulemek, and including pardoned prisoners within its ranks, JSO had been implicated in the worst atrocities of the Balkan wars. They were also closely linked to the underworld of organized crime in Zemun and elsewhere. By the end of the decade, the unit was increasingly used by Milosevic to eliminate potential competitors within Serbia. JSO was linked, for example, with the 2000 kidnapping and murder of Ivan Stambolic, an opposition politician who had been powerful in the 1980s.<sup>36</sup> These were the troops that would, in the words of one SDB official, "kill you in a heartbeat."<sup>37</sup>

### **Autumn 2000**

The massive demonstrations of October 5<sup>th</sup> were the culmination of a mounting political crisis engendered by an increasingly widespread popular response to evidence that the September 24<sup>th</sup> presidential elections had been mired in fraud.

It began the previous summer when Slobodan Milosevic had called a surprise round of early elections. The perennially fractured opposition responded, under pressure from student activists to maintain cohesion, by cobbling together a coalition of 18 disparate parties. On August 7<sup>th</sup> the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) announced the relatively unknown politician Vojislav Kostunica to stand as candidate. Supported by

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<sup>35</sup> Ambassador Bill Montgomery, Email correspondence. April 18, 2008.. "The USG collectively viewed the threat from the security forces as potentially very, very serious. We were particularly worried about the Red Berets." Personal interview, May 12, 2008; Democratic Opposition of Serbia official (former). Personal interview. January 21, 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Hugh Griffiths "A Mafia Within the State" *Balkan Reconstruction Report* (Transitions Online, 28 March 2003.) The JSO commander, Milorad Ulemek, a.k.a. "Legija" has since been sentenced on 40 years in prison for his role in the murder.

<sup>37</sup> Senior official, SDB (former). Personal interview. April 7, 2008

coalition of civil society organizations that had begun to coalesce over the course of 2000 under the umbrella of the student-led organization Otpor (Resistance), DOS ran a strong campaign that yielded record turnouts during the September 24<sup>th</sup> elections. When it became clear that the results left him the loser, Milosevic attempted to falsify the vote. Fortunately, opposition and civil society leaders had anticipated this contingency, and through a parallel vote count were able to expose the fraud.

Scattered regional protests began four days later, as did an initial strike at the Nikola Tesla thermal-electric power plant, located 60 km south of Belgrade. The plant, supplied by the Kolubara soft coal mines, was responsible for nearly half of Serbia's electricity production.<sup>38</sup> When the Kolubara miners shut down operations on the evening of September 29<sup>th</sup>, the regime began to take action. Despite a growing police presence, the strikes would continue, becoming more formalized, through the decisive moments on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Security Forces: Behaviors and Decisions**

This following section first reviews the responses within Serbian police, military, and intelligence services to the challenges laid down by the DOS coalition, Otpor, and other civil society actors. Then, through the prism of the five strategic objectives, it evaluates the challengers' strategies surrounding the strikes, popular mobilization, and political outreach efforts and assess their relative influence on security force loyalty shifts.

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<sup>38</sup> "Weekly News Summary," 30 Sep-5 Oct 2000. *BETA* in English. Accessed from World News Connection on February 15, 2008.

## ***Interior Ministry***

The behaviors and decision made within the ranks of Serbia’s police forces in response to challengers’ actions were mixed. At the top of the chain of command, many senior officers remained largely compliant – even over-delivering for the regime - until it became clear that they would not be supported by the ranks beneath them.<sup>39</sup> Those in more junior positions engaged in foot-dragging, disregarded orders, and even practiced subversion, increasing their covert assistance to opposition forces.

Instances of subversion had become prevalent in local police stations in the weeks following the elections. The nature of interactions between police contacts and members of the opposition had undergone a substantial shift. Zoran Dragasic, a professor at the security faculty of the University of Belgrade and member of General Vuk Obradovic’s Social Democracy party, had many students who were serving members of the police institutions in Belgrade. He recalls that “people I had recognized as [politically] passive became active at that time” and began approaching them about their support for the opposition.<sup>40</sup> Some junior officers who had previously discussed their political sympathies with him began, after the elections, to come forward with “very concrete information” offering deals about how “they’re preparing us to attack people,” and where “the strongest police forces were gathering.”<sup>41</sup> By the morning of October 5<sup>th</sup>, information exchanges had heightened to the point where many officers with contacts in

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<sup>39</sup> One notable exception was when, after the elections, DOS politician Nebojsa Covic initiated contact with Police Chief Vlastimir Djordjevic. Amidst rumors in the Ministry of the Interior that he had expressed the belief that Milosevic should step down, Djordjevic was effectively cut out of the chain of command during the days preceding October 5<sup>th</sup>. D Bujosevic and I Radovanovic, *The Fall of Milosevic: The October 5 Revolution*. (Palgrave, 2003.)

<sup>40</sup> Professor Zoran Dragasic. Personal interview. April 4, 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Professor Zoran Dragasic. Personal interview. April 4, 2008.

the opposition were actively communicating their positions and sentiments of their colleagues via cell-phone.<sup>42</sup>

The position of the top tiers of the Interior Ministry had long been clear. In May 2000, head of the Public Security Sector, General Vlastimir Djordjevic had issued orders to “identify members of ‘Otpor’, collect data on their numbers, intentions and affiliations, their movements and other activities and send all information to the Police Directorate.”<sup>43</sup> Local police officers were also issued periodic orders for mass arrests of Otpor members and, insiders say, tacitly encouraged to use violent force against activists.<sup>44</sup> Often, police officers’ willingness to commit brutalities had varied between individuals or between cities. As Popovic recalls, “we very quickly understood the trends. In some cases where a chief of police was a member of the ruling party, arrests were more common and our activists were brutally treated. In areas where the police were more apolitical, we had space to work.”<sup>45</sup> A police officer similarly noted disparities within the police forces: “most police officers dealing directly with [Otpor] were friendly, but a certain minority were brutal.”<sup>46</sup> In all, over 1,000 Otpor representatives were arrested over the course of the group’s 2000 campaign, and treatment of detainees varied significantly.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Velimir Ilic. Personal interview. April 8, 2008. See also Carlotta Gall, “How Small Town Turned Out For Kostunica at a Key Time” *The New York Times*, 10/9/2000. Gall writes that “off-duty policemen used their walkie-talkies to give the demonstrators crucial warnings of police efforts to block the procession to Belgrade.”

<sup>43</sup> “Instruction 33/2000,” issued May 11th 2000 by General Vlastimir Djordjevic, Ministry of Interior. Cited in Binnendijk and Marovic (2006).

<sup>44</sup> Senior police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia. Telephone interview. August 26, 2006.

<sup>45</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>46</sup> Senior police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia. Telephone interview. August 26, 2006

<sup>47</sup> Sharp (1973) 323; See also “Police Crackdown on Otpor” Humanitarian Law Center publications, November 23 2001. Available online at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/Publikacije/840.en.html>

However, over the course of the months prior to the elections, local police officers had begun to perform their duties against opposition members with notably less zeal. As one activist later recalled, “in the beginning there were beatings, torture by the police. Later there were not so many instances... [The change] was not reflected in number of arrests. It was in the relations with people who were arrested.”<sup>48</sup> While a May 2000 countrywide crackdown against Otpor had involved intensive interrogation sessions, by September, in towns across Serbia, arrests and interrogations by local police officers often lasted mere minutes as officers recorded minimal information.<sup>49</sup>

Those at the top tiers of the Ministry consequently received less information as foot-dragging increased prior to and after the elections. Police officers throughout Serbia found that “doing nothing was becoming an increasingly powerful tool...phone calls that could have been made were put off, and intelligence reports that could have been sent to officials at the top of the pyramid instead sat in drawers.”<sup>50</sup> From the top of the ranks, Police Chief General Obrad Stevanovic recalls that he was “never really satisfied with the information I received from the people who were supposed to feed me information – there was a lack of accuracy and completeness.”<sup>51</sup> Stevanovic ultimately left Belgrade to make a tour of local police stations to the south in order to gather accurate information.<sup>52</sup>

The first major post-election standoff between police forces and challengers -- at the Kolubara mines -- offers key insights into the dynamics at play. General Stevanovic recalls that political leaders “were expecting the police to resolve this issue.”<sup>53</sup> During the

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<sup>48</sup> Ivan Andric. Personal interview. August 30, 2006.

<sup>49</sup> Ivan Andric. Personal interview. August 30, 2006.

<sup>50</sup> Tim Marshall, *Shadowplay*, (Belgrade, Edicija Samizdat, 2003 (English)) 203.

<sup>51</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

<sup>52</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

<sup>53</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008. Stevanovic was Buha’s supervisor in 2000.

standoff with miners, however, police forces proved ineffective. By September 30<sup>th</sup>, the strike had become more formalized as new shifts of workers joined. Five buses and ten smaller vehicles full of police officers arrived at Kolubara but after billeting nearby for the evening they withdrew.<sup>54</sup> Police returned during the night between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>55</sup> Two-hundred officers from the Banovo Brdo district, commanded by Belgrade police chief Bosko Buha, were mobilized by Stevanovic during this time.<sup>56</sup> However, this unit also proved unreliable. According to later accounts by Buha, communication between the police chief and the miners helped avoid a potentially bloody showdown. Buha's subsequent accounts of the events reveal both the pressure he was under to end the strike, and his reluctance to take violent action against the protestors. According to Buha's testimony, after a tense standoff during which he was receiving orders to clear the mines, he and the miners agreed upon a plan that would allow him to appear to be following orders without actually compromising the strike.<sup>57</sup> Strikers would slowly leave the compound through the front gate, thus creating the impression that they were leaving. They would then return to the mining compound through a nearby hole in the chain link fence.<sup>58</sup>

More generally, officers present believe that Stevanovic simply "lost his chain of command."<sup>59</sup> Another officer who had colleagues at the mines recalls that "this is the

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<sup>54</sup> D Marinkovic (2003) 'Strike at Kolubara – a case study' *South-East Europe Review for Labour and Social Affairs* 6(3): 41-72.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* Darko hypothesizes that the police most likely retreated because they recognized that they did not have the manpower available to disperse the strikers.

<sup>56</sup> Bujosevic and Radovanovic (2003) 18-22.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Vulevic Spasoje. Personal interview, May 12, 2008.

point when the police brigade... they didn't refuse orders but they did everything they could to avoid them.”<sup>60</sup>

The 70-member Special Antiterrorist Unit (SAJ) within the Interior Ministry was also sent in to break the strike.<sup>61</sup> SAJ complied with orders to mobilize, but some demarcated their willingness to obey by expressing reluctance to obey orders to repress civilians. It appears that some within the unit were subverting by actively communicating with the opposition. According to Velimir Ilic, contacts within SAJ proved important. They informed him of the number of local protestors necessary to deter a crackdown – 5000 – and contacted him when it was necessary to bus in these protestors.<sup>62</sup> The assistant commander of the unit, Spasoje Vulevic, confirms that he was in touch with Ilic during the events after he realized, from conversations of his superior officers, that “the plan was to defend the main position in Kolubara.”<sup>63</sup> On the ground, allowing them to adjust tactics as additional information came in. Ultimately, the SAJ unit also refused to take action.

A second major indication of police unreliability was their widespread disregard of orders to prevent columns of protestors from entering Belgrade on the morning of October 5th.<sup>64</sup> Many officers “explicitly refused [superiors’] orders to drive their cars to Belgrade and to pose the barricades on the highway.”<sup>65</sup> Nis mayor Zoran Zivkovic, a DOS politician at the time who had developed relationships within the Nis police service,

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<sup>60</sup> Milisavljevic, Radovan. Police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia. Personal interview, August 20, 2006.

<sup>61</sup> Several days earlier, its commander, who had been in touch with Djinjic’s camp, had been dismissed from his position and replaced by a former member of the notorious “Red Berets” special unit.

<sup>62</sup> Velimir Ilic. Personal interview. April 8, 2008; Ilic recalls that as “the police started from Belgrade... we put people in the cars and busses and put them in that place to make it more than 5,000 people. And then the people from that unit said bring another thousand people and then we will not take any action. And then they told us there would not be an attack, there are enough of you there.”<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Vulevic Spasoje. Personal interview. May 12, 2008.

<sup>64</sup> William Montgomery, (Amb.) Email correspondence. April 18, 2008.

<sup>65</sup> Zoran Zivkovic. Email correspondence. April 30, 2008.

was in close touch with his contacts throughout October 5<sup>th</sup>, a great deal of whom “promised that they would be on the side of Serbia’s citizens.”<sup>66</sup> Reports of breaches of the highway barricades were widely reported throughout the morning of the 5th by national news media as cars, buses, and bulldozers from the provinces made their way towards Belgrade.<sup>67</sup> Similar scenarios were playing out along the Ibar highway, as crowds headed north from Cacak. According independent news agency *BETA*, police blocked the Ibar Highway with “two trucks and set up a cordon consisting of 50 policemen wearing body armor and carrying shields. People pushed the trucks off the road, and the police failed to intervene while they were doing so.”<sup>68</sup>

Many had decided the night before that they would not follow orders to engage in violence, regardless of the size of the crowds. On the evening of October 4<sup>th</sup>, according to one source, officers in the Interior Ministry had received verbal orders to prepare lethal means to stop the convoys heading towards the capital.<sup>69</sup> In one corroborating example, officers from units assigned to block the highway near Kraljevo spoke with each other after receiving their orders on the evening of October 4<sup>th</sup>. A high-ranking officer who was present for the conversation recalls “we sat around discussing the current situation. We said, we are not going to be able to prevent them from leaving... What if they are on the highway and thirty or forty want to pass? Who will shoot their machine gun? Nobody.”<sup>70</sup> As they discussed the potential orders that they might receive, trusted colleagues had

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<sup>66</sup> Zoran Zivkovic. Email correspondence. April 30, 2008.

<sup>67</sup> “Convoy of DOS supporters breaks through police barrier at Celije, proceeds to Belgrade.” *BETA*. October 05, 2000. Retrieved February 15, 2008 from World News Connection.; “Convoy of DOS supporters nearing Belgrade.” *BETA*. October 05, 2000. Retrieved Feruary 15, 2008 from World News Connection.

<sup>68</sup> “Convoy of DOS supporters breaks through police barrier at Celije, proceeds to Belgrade.” *BETA*. October 05, 2000. Retrieved February 15, 2008 from World News Connection

<sup>69</sup> According to one account, orders were given by Police Minister Vlajko Stojilovic through Police Chief Ljubo to prepare rocket launchers and bazookas. Bujosevic and Radovanovic (2003) 8, 35

<sup>70</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia. Personal interview, August 20, 2006

mutually acknowledged that they would not act, establishing secret lines of trust with each other that allowed them to maintain communication and situational awareness as they were presented with decisions the following day.<sup>71</sup> Such communal discussions prior to October 5<sup>th</sup> recall Sun Tzu's observation that "one whose troops repeatedly congregate in small groups here and there, whispering together, has lost the masses."<sup>72</sup>

Others had similarly decided to disregard orders to mobilize. In the town of Smederevo near Belgrade, for example, protestors gathered outside the local DOS headquarters to stop two buses full of policemen on their way to the capital. According to BETA's news report on the interaction, the "policemen, who exchanged greetings with about 2,000 assembled citizens, returned to the police station promising not to go to Belgrade."<sup>73</sup> As the police officers communicated with their superiors during the events, their excuse were sometimes practical - "we don't have enough men to preserve public peace and order in our towns" – but, as one police analyst recalls, also became increasingly implausible: "the police were definitely reluctant to fight for Milosevic...so sabotage by the rank and file took many faces: 'We were lost; the bus broke down; we were stopped by a vicious bunch of pregnant women; where is Belgrade?' etc."<sup>74</sup> According to one source, of the 600 members of special police units called in from the provinces only 300 arrived.<sup>75</sup> As General Stevanovic, acknowledges, on the roads to

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<sup>71</sup> One police participant recalls that "that is exactly what happened. Of course, we were all hoping for no casualties." Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia. Personal interview, August 20, 2006.

<sup>72</sup> Sun Tzu, in Sawyer (1986) 91.

<sup>73</sup> "Smederevo Citizens Prevent Two Police Buses From Going to Belgrade" *BETA* 10/05/00 World News Connection, accessed February 15, 2008.

<sup>74</sup> Milos Vasic. Email correspondence. May 16, 2008.

<sup>75</sup> Bujosevic and Radovanovic (2003) 32.

Belgrade, “many blockades had a relatively low level of forces. Even those forces that were deployed were not willing to comply with the orders.”<sup>76</sup>

Disregard for orders also took place in the streets of Belgrade. Another potential flashpoint occurred in the afternoon when DOS politicians and their allies, many of whom were former police and military officers, began advancing into the Parliament. As they fought through tear gas fired from policemen still loyal to the regime, hundreds of thousands of protestors watched from behind them.<sup>77</sup> The police, who were “told to use all possible means to fight back,” ultimately put down their weapons in the face of the pressure.<sup>78</sup> Officers within the police forces who had been in touch with opposition leaders used the strength of the demonstrators to convince their colleagues that the only option was surrender.<sup>79</sup> For others who had attempted to comply with their orders until the last moment, the scale of the crowds and the defection of their colleagues, led them ultimately to stand down. As one former police officer who later claimed to have helped the opposition recalls, “finally after seeing particular units breaking down, the moment came when the rest of the force understood that there really was no way to fight against half a million people in Belgrade. Individuals and units were leaving on their own.”<sup>80</sup>

One of the key police units to disregard orders in the late afternoon of October 5<sup>th</sup> was SAJ. As the regular police forces crumbled in the face of pressure by demonstrators, Milosevic attempted to call in additional support – including JSO and SAJ – to confront

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<sup>76</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

<sup>77</sup> Damjan de Krnjevic-Miskovic. ‘Serbia’s Prudent Revolution’, *The Journal of Democracy*, vol.12 no.3 (July 2001) 96-110.

<sup>78</sup> Ceda Jovanovic. Personal interview. August 25, 2006.

<sup>79</sup> Carlotta Gall, “How Small Town Turned Out For Kostunica at a Key Time” *The New York Times*, October 9, 2000. The interview noted that Ilic had been “scared all along that his agreement with the police was some kind of trap” but contacts within the ranks encouraged DOS leaders to “keep on going. Sustain the pressure until 3:30 p.m., and then we’ll get the order to charge and we’ll refuse [orders.]”

<sup>80</sup> Former police officer, Republic of Serbia. Interview by Steve York. February, 2 2001

the large groups congregated by the state-owned Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) station. JSO drove paramilitary vehicles through the crowds to the SAJ troops and informed them that the SAJ mission was to secure the building from the outside, while JSO rescued police officers inside the building.<sup>81</sup> When the SAJ commander related these orders to his troops, they balked. As he returned to speak with Legija in his vehicle, his troops turned to the protestors then greeted them warmly and “had the kisses, etc” as one SAJ officer present put it.<sup>82</sup>

### ***Ministry of Defense***

A range of behaviors could be observed within the military forces. Some at the top of the General Staff – particularly Generals Pavkovic and Delic – seemed prepared to over-deliver for the regime. Many mid and low-ranking military officers, however, had demarcated their positions by indicating unwillingness to engage in violence against civilians. When orders did come to mobilize, these ranks engaged in foot-dragging, and sometimes overt disregard of orders.

Subsequently leaked transcripts of General Staff meetings surrounding the elections reveal the extent of VJ Chief of Staff General Pavkovic’s interest in the outcome of the elections and subsequent challenges to Milosevic.<sup>83</sup> His public messages appear to have been mixed. One statement prior to the elections, allegedly warning of civil war should Milosevic lose, had elicited particular concern.<sup>84</sup> Although after the elections, he publicly

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<sup>81</sup> Colonel Vulevic Spasoje. Personal interview, May 12, 2008.

<sup>82</sup> Colonel Vulevic Spasoje. Personal interview, May 12, 2008.

<sup>83</sup> Pavkovic appears to have been receiving regular briefings on the state of the elections, according to the notes of one source reportedly present. Vlajkovic (2004) Part II, 71.

<sup>84</sup> Paul D’Aneiri cites a statement by Pavkovic “announc[ing] the army’s neutrality and support for the results of the election process” as “publicly encouraged the protestors by ensuring their safety.” (D’Aneiri, 2006.) However, interviews with DOS and Otpor leaders indicate that, while they were confident that most army conscripts and officers would not act against the people, most were highly suspicious of Pavkovic’s

stated that VJ would remain neutral, he also said he would support the results of the election, which he believed to be in Milosevic's favor.<sup>85</sup>

General Pavkovic appears to have attempted on a number of occasions to personally intervene in matters normally outside of the purview of the army. For example, on October 2, as it became increasingly clear that the Kolubara miners would continue to support the opposition, Pavkovic visited the mines in a military vehicle to demand that miners return to work.<sup>86</sup> According to reports of witnesses, a column of twenty military vehicles advanced from the nearby town of Vrbovno. VJ military maneuvers purportedly continued around the mines that evening.<sup>87</sup>

Although the VJ did not get further involved in the strikes, Pavkovic appears to have ordered a number of units to begin preparations for a potential showdown in Belgrade. On October 5<sup>th</sup>, Pavkovic's command 63<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade, which had been put on a state of combat readiness since September 24<sup>th</sup>, was stationed around the General Staff headquarters.<sup>88</sup> Members of the 72<sup>nd</sup> special brigade had also moved from RTS station to the General Staff headquarters.<sup>89</sup> Two battalions of mechanized tank units – including the unit that had been sent to the streets in March 1991 – were also on standby, some with

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intentions surrounding October 5<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>85</sup> As *Vreme* journalist and military expert Dejan Anastasijevic puts it, “when head of general staff says publicly, if Slobo loses these elections there will be civil war, that is something serious.” Dejan Anastasijevic, interview with author, Belgrade, 8/30/06; for Pavkovic’s perceptions on the elections, see also Vlajkovic (*Part II*) (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia: Belgrade, 2004, 71

<sup>86</sup> “Kolubara Miners Tell Gen Pavkovic Work To Resume When Victory Recognized” Belgrade BETA in Serbo-Croatian 10/3/2000. World News Connection, accessed on 2/15/08

<sup>87</sup> Damjan de Krnjevic-Miskovic (2001) 57; According to one military historian, although VJ officials later said that they were merely “conducting regular training activities,” there was considerable concern about the military presence, and “everyone asked if they would send the army against the miners.” Historian, Ministry of Defense, Republic of Serbia. Interview, 4/30/2008.

<sup>88</sup> Transcript of Lt. Gen. Miodrag Simic, September 2000. Vlajkovic (2004) Part II, 63; See also Bujosevic and Radovanovic (2003) 55.

<sup>89</sup> Units from the 72<sup>nd</sup> Special Brigade were deployed to the RTS television station during the morning of October 5th, and were reportedly under pressure to maintain their presence. Vlajkovic (2004) Part II.

engines running and weapons loaded.<sup>90</sup> Soldiers and officers within those units, according to one officer present, believed that they “were the ones that should have secured the regime of Slobodan Milosevic.”<sup>91</sup>

A captain in command of one of the mechanized units outside Belgrade recalls the orders to turn on the tanks as chaos mounted during the late afternoon of October 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>92</sup> In response to increasing concerns from within his unit about the possibility that they might be ordered to mobilize against protestors, the captain promised them that he wouldn’t “allow them to be misused” and informed one of his soldiers – an Otpor member – that should the order come, he would ask his troops to join the crowds with white sheets that the captain had stored in his backpack.<sup>93</sup> Similar scenarios were playing out elsewhere as mid-ranking commanders reassured their nervous troops.<sup>94</sup>

As the potential for demarcation, disregard, and even counter-balancing mounted, there appear to have been steps taken from above to replace units whose reliability was in question. The captain mentioned above recalls that once it “became quite obvious that we didn’t want to go,” his unit was dismissed and replaced with a “special squad.” These troops had been flown directly from three months of military training in southern Serbia,

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<sup>90</sup> Captain, Serbian army (former). Personal interview. August 23, 2006.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> He also noted that “around 6pm, after there were clashes with our police in front of parliament, and they had set the national TV house and parliament on fire...we received a signal to turn on engines, set up radio equipment, and form a line of vehicles that would actually face the gate of the camp... Engines were running. And then after some time, we received ammunition. We did this drill, and then we faced, with two hours to wait, and nothing happened. At that time there was huge tension.” Captain, Serbian army (former). Personal interview. August 23, 2006.

<sup>93</sup> The former captain recalled that the plan was that “we will leave the barracks, we will raise our weapons to the sky, we will put blanks in the weapons, and we will go straight to the streets & square. We will open doors, and will join the people. I had to give some kind of signal to him, or I could not control my soldiers, because it was quite clear how they thought.” Captain, Serbian army (former). Personal interview. August 23, 2006.

<sup>94</sup> DOS politician Zarko Korac recounts a story his driver’s one who was in the army, related to him. He was called to join the tank division “In front of everyone he said: I am sending you to Belgrade, and if someone tells you to shoot, say you have to obey your commander. Say my name, Say - I am under his command, he ordered me not to shoot people.” Zarko Korac. Personal interview. August 21, 2006.

where they had been denied cell phone access and “kept in the media darkness for quite a while” as they prepared for deployment in Kosovo.<sup>95</sup> The unit captain believes that “when they realized that they could not rely on us in Belgrade, on the morning of 5 October they just got those buses crowded with troops from that squad.”<sup>96</sup> However, even these troops showed reservations, after speaking with friends and former colleagues about the situation, and took white sheets of surrender with them in case they were needed.<sup>97</sup>

In addition to the two battalions in the barracks, a company in Bubanj Protok, a base east of Belgrade near Avala mountain, also stood at the ready, equipped with tanks, mechanized trucks, and ammunition.<sup>98</sup> Varying reports have emerged about the nature of orders given to this unit, but it appears that on the evening of October 5<sup>th</sup>, they were asked to move in the direction of Banjica, where the RTS station was located.

Afterwards, Dejan Anastasijevic, a reporter on military issues from *Vreme*, offered his understanding based on sources close to the events:

Milosevic was calling Pavkovic, according to inside sources who told me afterwards, on the night of the 5<sup>th</sup> October, trying frantically to ask “where are the tanks, where are the tanks” and Pavkovic kept calling up the military base in [Bubanj Protok] just outside Belgrade, and essentially he ordered them to come out, and it turned out that the ‘tanks were not ready,’ and ‘there was a shortage of fuel...’ When the tanks rolled out, they went 5 clicks towards the center of Belgrade, and then they just stopped.<sup>99</sup>

Accounts of the tank movements outside Bubanj Protok offer varying interpretations of the role of General Pavkovic. Milos Vasic, a prominent *Vreme* journalist specializing in

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<sup>95</sup> The captain observed that the soldiers arriving “had a dark tan, it was obvious that they had spent a long period time outside camps/terrain. I recognized a few of them.” Captain, Serbian army (former). Personal interview. August 23, 2006.

<sup>96</sup> Captain, Serbian army (former). Personal interview. August 23, 2006.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Professor Zoran Dragisic. Personal interview. April 4, 2008. The captain present further recalled that the soldiers “brought their ammunition with them because in the normal rules, how we deal with situations, we never put people with ammunition. But they brought it with them in the trucks.” Captain, Serbian army (former). Personal interview. August 23, 2006.

<sup>99</sup> Dejan Anastasijevic. Personal interview. August 30, 2006.

security issues, argues that Pavkovic “was surrounded in his cabinet by his fellow generals, so he did not dare order for the armored tanks to move toward Belgrade at all.”<sup>100</sup> Others have highlighted the actions of General Delic, the commanding chief of Belgrade corps, in attempting to mobilize tanks, though his precise role is also disputed. One security studies professor with strong military connections offered the following version:

I knew people from those units. They were in Bubanj Protok... [My friend] told me that that Delic ordered him to start tanks and go downtown. And after 10 meters, 50 meters, one tank has trouble with engine, another tank has problem with this, they were quite good tanks. But soldiers and officers decided to refuse orders. Between Bubanj Protok (Avala) and Banjinica, they turned into the military barracks, and it was obvious that army was not ready to react.<sup>101</sup>

Whatever the admittedly conflicting accounts surrounding the events, most versions of the narrative emphasize the significance of knowledge by commanders that it was unlikely that any orders to bring tanks into Belgrade would be obeyed. One military source with a friend in the Bubanj Protok unit recalled that “over the night those tanks returned from Avala, and we heard some rumors that these generals wanted them to go to the city and it was refused by the company commander.”<sup>102</sup> Milos Vasic said of the division that “the commanding officers flatly refused to move. They only started the engines to buy some time, as the time was measured in minutes at that moment.”<sup>103</sup> Dejan Anastasijevic, a Vreme journalist, believes that Pavkovic “gave up when he realized that his orders were not going to be passed down.”<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Milos Vasic. Telephone interview. May 18, 2008.

<sup>101</sup> Professor Zoran Dragisic, Personal interview. April 4, 2008.

<sup>102</sup> Captain, Serbian army (former). Personal interview. August 23, 2006.

<sup>103</sup> Milos Vasic. Telephone interview. May 18, 2008.

<sup>104</sup> Dejan Anastasijevic. Personal interview. August 30, 2006

## ***State Security***

As local police officers showed unwillingness to conduct intensive interrogations, the SDB, or state intelligence officers, performed targeted and lengthy interrogations against known members of Otpor until the final weeks of the campaign.<sup>105</sup> However, as the elections approached, even elements of the traditionally loyal SBD appear to increasingly have engaged in “white strikes, deciding not to go the extra mile” including underreporting information to their superiors, leaking unauthorized information, and engaging in unauthorized contacts with members of the opposition.”<sup>106</sup> According to one knowledgeable source, as October 5<sup>th</sup> approached, sections of intelligence knew about intensifying opposition activities, but “there were no arrests because there was a paralysis at the top” due to lack of information. Those who engaging in foot-dragging “didn’t want to help a coup d’etat but nor did I any longer want to help Slobo.”<sup>107</sup>

The service’s Unit for Special Operations – JSO – ultimately remained compliant until the final moments. Late in the night of October 4<sup>th</sup>, the leader of the JSO, Legija reportedly requested to speak with Djinjic. During their now-famous meeting, Djinjic reportedly offered a truce of sorts, assuring Legija that the crowd would remain nonviolent.<sup>108</sup> In response, JSO would refrain from repression. According to one source, Legija had acknowledged that his orders were “extreme,” and included instructions to shoot RPGs into the crowd if necessary.<sup>109</sup> Legija and his unit’s grisly reputation from the worst horrors of the Balkan wars left little doubt that they would act as viciously as were ordered to. Djinjic’s former bodyguard and close associate recalls that Djinjic “had

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<sup>105</sup> Ivan Andric. Personal interview. August 30, 2006.

<sup>106</sup> Senior official, SDB (former). Personal interview. April 7, 2008.

<sup>107</sup> Tim Marshall attributes this quote to an anonymous “Belgrade industrialist.” Marshall (2003) 203

<sup>108</sup> Western diplomat. Personal interview. August 21, 2006

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

direct information from the Colonel Legija that they will not think twice if their commander gives them an order [to shoot]...we couldn't count on them [to stand aside].”<sup>110</sup>

When Legija’s troops arrived at RTS station on the afternoon of October 5<sup>th</sup>, they first made a sweep through the block on which protestors were gathered, shooting rubber bullets and tear gas into the crowds.<sup>111</sup> However, participants say, as it became increasingly clear that they would not be supported by the Special Antiterrorist Unit (SAJ), JSO stood down.<sup>112</sup> Legija then theatrically proclaimed solidarity with the crowd. Having watched Legija’s actions during the event, Vulevic recalls observing that he “didn’t have strict decision in his head...he would see what the outcome was.”<sup>113</sup> Indeed, while some accounts of October 5<sup>th</sup> have emphasized a “deal” between Djinjic and Legija as critical to the bloodless outcome of October 5<sup>th</sup>, it was not that clear cut. Instead, as a Djinjic associate close to the events recalls, there was a clear recognition by opposition leaders that “in that moment... JSO decided to take the straw that they recently said they received, because in that moment they couldn’t do anything else.”<sup>114</sup>

### **Assessment of Strategic Objectives**

Each of the five strategic objectives outlined in Chapter 1 appears to have played a significant role in contributing to security force loyalty shifts in 2000. As events escalated into strikes and mass demonstrations in Belgrade, the likelihood of challengers’ success, high costs of repression associated with the large crowds, and reassurance that

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<sup>110</sup> Djinjic bodyguard (former). Personal interview. April 8, 2008.

<sup>111</sup> Colonel Vulevic Spasoje. Personal interview, May 12, 2008.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Legija was apparently “waiting for special antiterrorist unit to break the mass, and then other units would come in.” Former Djinjic bodyguard, Interview in Belgrade, 4/8/08

the costs of accommodation would be low seemed particularly relevant to Serbian security forces as they contemplated their potential responses. However, as challengers prepared for showdown, their perceived legitimacy was particularly important in initiating a cascade of defections that facilitated communication with security forces and reinforced existing fractures. A significant decline in regime legitimacy following the Kosovo defeat had set the stage, and was successfully capitalized on by the Otpor movement, exacerbating hesitation in the ranks.

### **Strategic Objective I: Expose Regime Illegitimacy**

Antipathy against the Milosevic regime – throughout the broader Serbian population and within its own security forces – was palpable by the autumn of 2000. Across institutions, perceptions of the regime’s illegitimacy were manifested in a general reluctance to perpetuate the regime’s power. As one Western witness recalls, Milosevic seemed to be “wobbling along on a tightrope...his strategy was to get up in the morning, improvise all day, then go back to bed.”<sup>115</sup> The strategy for challengers, therefore, was to “pressure the opponent, and when he makes a mistake...blast the ball in the net.”<sup>116</sup> Milosevic’s decline in legitimacy appears to have had direct implications for willingness to fully comply with regime orders. One military journalist later commented that “regardless of what Milosevic’s own generals thought, the mid and higher mid levels of the military hated his guts with deep feeling. That’s why the military didn’t lift a finger.”<sup>117</sup> Military intelligence units also reportedly withheld known information about the locations of Otpor printing presses, choosing not to “talk to the other services about it

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<sup>115</sup> Charles Crawford, British Ambassador to Belgrade in 2001. quoted by Tim Marshall (2003) 175.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>117</sup> Milos Vasic. Telephone interview. May 18, 2008.

because it had started to become a national consensus that Slobo had to go.”<sup>118</sup> Those motivated by frustration with the regime sometimes took proactive measures to change the dynamics of loyalty shifts. In one anecdotal case, opposition leaders recall police officers who were against Milosevic before the demonstrations and played an influential role within their police units as they worked to convince their colleagues to shift loyalties as well: “at a certain moment they refused the orders of their superiors and were trying to persuade their colleagues too.”<sup>119</sup>

Recognizing the pronounced problem within military ranks, the VJ General Staff had laid out a persuasion strategy in the run-up to the elections that reportedly included an information campaign directed by the General Staff’s Morale Directorate to distribute “theses for the information of the members of the VJ” on “the aims of the patriotic forces in the country, the aims of the enemy forces and the collaborationists.”<sup>120</sup> Junior officers recall, in the days prior to the elections, an “intensive campaign within the army in which we were told to vote for Milosevic and his party.”<sup>121</sup>

However, their efforts appear to have been in vain. The campaign, elections, and the fraud that followed served as a catalyst to focus frustrations that had long been simmering. This first became apparent at the ballot box. According to one source, “the first time [senior military officers] were made aware of the fact that the army did not support the regime in total was when they analyzed how many soldiers in the barracks

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<sup>118</sup> Marshall (2003) 187.

<sup>119</sup> Carlotta Gall, “How Small Town Turned Out For Kostunica at a Key Time” *The New York Times*, 10/9/2000.

<sup>120</sup> Vlajkovic (2004) Part II, 83.

<sup>121</sup> Captain, Serbian army (former). Personal interview. August 23, 2006.

voted for the opposition.”<sup>122</sup> While formal records of voting by police and military populations are not currently available to researchers, unofficial reports have indicated that a majority of the rank and file in both the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Defense had voted against Milosevic.<sup>123</sup>

Serbia’s security forces had also been primed by the efforts of Otpor, which successfully exposed and exploited growing frustration within the ranks. By fall 2000, the environment had shifted significantly from that during the NATO bombing, when Milosevic had benefited from the “rally ‘round the flag” mentality that gripped the nation. (The first night bombs fell on Belgrade, prominent opposition newspapers tossed their prepared issues in favor of ones without criticism of the government).<sup>124</sup>

Ultimately the loss of the war in Kosovo took a significant toll on Milosevic’s legitimacy in the security forces. One police officer who had been involved in operations in Kosovo later recalled that the one “thing that mostly made me see things differently...was when they claimed that we won the war after the bombing. It was funny.”<sup>125</sup> Other officers similarly cite Kosovo as the key issue around which Milosevic lost the majority of his support.<sup>126</sup>

Otpor took full advantage of the disenchantment. Over the course of 2000 despite efforts by the regime to bolster its own legitimacy. Recognizing the vulnerability, Otpor activists crafted a negative campaign against Milosevic by working throughout 2000 to co-opt one of his traditional sources of legitimacy – Serbian nationalism. In June, in an

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<sup>122</sup> Captain, Serbian army (former). Personal interview. August 23, 2006. He recalls that military conscripts voted in the barracks, as part of a “twisted system in which they would take the voting boxes into the barracks, along with the lists”

<sup>123</sup> Vlajkovic (2004) Part II, 84.

<sup>124</sup> Svetozar Stojanovic. *Serbia: The Democratic Revolution*. (Humanity Books. 2003) 118.

<sup>125</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia.. Personal interview, August 20, 2006.

<sup>126</sup> Colonel Vulevic Spasoje. Personal Interview, May 12, 2008.; Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Republic of Serbia. Personal interview. April 8, 2008.

attempt to develop, in the words of one analyst, a “personality cult similar to the one bestowed on the late Marshall Tito,” Chief of Staff Nebojsa Pavkovic had proposed that Milosevic be proclaimed “the people’s hero”, and General Dragolub Ojdanic, compared Milosevic’s Kosovo policy to the strategies pursued by 19<sup>th</sup> century Serbian icon Milos Obrenovic.<sup>127</sup> In response, Otpor activists began distributing badges in Belgrade labeled “I’m a national hero” to be worn by average citizens.<sup>128</sup>

Election fraud – and the ensuing protests – proved to be a second “critical event” that served as a pivotal point for security force perceptions of regime legitimacy. As one senior police officer later commented, evidence of election fraud triggered a moment in which:

each police officer understood that if he were to defend the people in power, he would be defending something that should not be defended, something not justified. It was a key moment when each and every police officer was thinking by himself. And that was on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September. And then the officers developed a kind of divided personality. As professionals they thought they should act in accordance with the orders received. And as a person they understood that would mean injustice.<sup>129</sup>

This ‘divided personality’ created hesitation in the ranks. In the days following the elections, and more tangibly, in the midst of throngs of protestors in Belgrade, police officers increasingly recognized that Serbian civilians had gathered “in order to acknowledge a fact that needs to be acknowledged. [The police] were aware that Milosevic had lost.”<sup>130</sup>

They were aware in large part because of the existence of independent monitoring

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<sup>127</sup> Stipe Sikavica “The war-time and peace-time abuses of the Yugoslav Army” In the Triangle of the State Power Army, Police, Paramilitary Units (*Helsinki files, Belgrade, 2001*)

<sup>128</sup> Joshua Paulson “Removing the Dictator in Serbia 1996-2000.In Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*, 326

<sup>129</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. interview, 4/8/2008. The general also observed that “the subjective perception of police was that they are defending justice helps the police to stay determined.”

<sup>130</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal Interview. April 8, 2008.

capabilities that had been set up prior to the elections. As elections grew closer, Otpor balanced its negative anti-Milosevic campaign with a positive ‘Get Out the Vote’ tour run by local NGOs throughout Serbia to encourage voter participation and later to oversee vote tabulation.<sup>131</sup> During the elections, as Michael McFaul has observed, a parallel vote count organized by the civil society group CeSID’s representatives at 7,000 polling sites offered critical legitimacy to opposition claims of vote falsification.<sup>132</sup> As McFaul writes “ CeSID.. made the claim of falsification legitimate.”<sup>133</sup> this in turn exposed the illegitimacy of the regime for members of the security forces, and the public outcry that followed reinforced the point.

Throughout the campaign, in its attempts to persuade security forces of the illegitimacy of the regime, Otpor had frequently communicated the degree to which individuals in uniform were being abused. As Srdja Popovic later recalled,

“It was important to stress that actually if we won, they would win as well. That [the police] are not going to have to be under siege by normal people... that their job would be to protect law and order and not to arrest students who were wearing tee-shirts, etc. So all the time we were giving them this message – that everyone will benefit from this.”<sup>134</sup>

DOS politicians also contributed, emphasizing that the interests pursued by the regime did not track those of the nation, and that “that serving the regime did not mean serving the state and nation - quite the contrary.”<sup>135</sup> Kostunica stated publicly that “our message to the army and the police is that we are one. The army and the police are part of

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<sup>131</sup> Michael Staresinic. Personal Interview. August 31, 2006.

<sup>132</sup> Michael McFaul, ‘Transitions From Postcommunism’, *Journal of Democracy*, vol.16, no.3 (July 2005)

<sup>133</sup> Michael McFaul and Anders Aslund *Revolution In Orange*, (Carnegie Endowment: Washington, DC, 2006) 175

<sup>134</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>135</sup> Vladan Vlajkovic, *Military Secret (II)*, (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia; Belgrade, 2004), 83

the people; they exist to protect the people, not one man and his family.”<sup>136</sup> Officers reported that letters were sent to military families stating that “we were protecting Milosevic's family, and...that we were not protecting the workers.”<sup>137</sup> Before the elections, opposition leaders had further communicated, in the words of one former military officer “their firm conviction that the members of the VJ and the police understood this difference and would know for whom to vote at the ‘fateful elections.’”<sup>138</sup> After the elections, a prominent ally of the opposition called on “everyone, including the army and the police, to defend the interests of the people and the state rather than the individuals.”<sup>139</sup>

There were also messages that directly addressed the issue of disobedience. Nis mayor Zoran Zivkovic recalls that the “main message, both private and public, which had been sent to the representatives of public services, was that we considered them as a part of the Serbian people and we expected them not to use repression in the case of escalating conflict between government's powers and citizens.”<sup>140</sup> Such messages were noted with concern by members of the General Staff.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Steven Erlanger “After Yugoslavs Celebrate, Belgrade Orders a Runoff” *The New York Times*, September 28 2000. Cited in Paulson (2003) 328

<sup>137</sup> General Geza Farkas to General Nebojsa Pavkovic, May 2000. Cited in Vladan Vlajkovic, *Military Secret (Part I)* (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia: Belgrade, 2004), 227

<sup>138</sup> Vlajkovic (2004) Part II, 84

<sup>139</sup> The head of the Serbian Orthodox church, Patriarch Pavle Steven Earlinger, “Milosevic Seeking a Runoff Election After his Setback” *New York Times*, September 27 2000. Cited in Paulson (2003) 327

<sup>140</sup> Zoran Zivkovic. Email correspondence. April 30, 2008.

<sup>141</sup> Pavkovic is said to have noted, for example, that “attacks have stated will the calls for the denial of obedience, the story that there is a rift between the military leadership and the troops etc...This means constant presence in the units, constant conversations, constant informing and monitoring... We should not rule out the possibility of certain people at all levels of command surprising us.” Vlajkovic (2004) Part I, 245.

## **Strategic Objective II: Establish Challenger Legitimacy**

It was particularly helpful that the opposition and civil society groups supporting it were deemed by those in uniform to be an acceptable alternative to the status quo. The composition of the coalition that banded together against the Milosevic regime appears to have been particularly salient in the minds of those soldiers and police officers weighing opposition legitimacy, including: the choice of candidate, the solidarity of the nationalist Orthodox church and coal miners, and the support of family-members for the opposition. The behavior of challengers – in particular, an explicit commitment to nonviolent discipline throughout the campaign – also appears to have bolstered sympathies within the security forces.

Efforts made by challengers to achieve Strategic Objective II were made more difficult – and also more significant – because of the clear attempts by the regime to discredit them within the security institutions. During internal discussion between police, intelligence and military security chiefs in May 2000, one VJ general argued that:

what we are facing here is a mass organization called "Otpor", which is extremely dangerous, because it gathered a large number of young people... and that also has its militant wing, which has been commanded from abroad... by the CIA. It is from there that they recruit the perpetrators of the most horrid of all acts, like kidnapping and murders...<sup>142</sup>

Such sentiments were conveyed throughout the ranks of the military, as senior officers waged an intensive campaign labeling the opposition as unpatriotic.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> The general further declared that “as the perpetrators of these crimes there are also delinquents, drug addicts, psychologically disturbed people, convicts, homosexuals, and above all, a large number of people belonging to religious cults. So, their activities are comprehensive, and it has been directed to the bosom of this nation, to the young people” General Geza Farkus, May 2000. Cited in Vlajkovic (2004) Part I, 239.

<sup>143</sup> Captain, Serbian army (former). Personal interview. August 23, 2006. “We were told that he was the real patriot, opposition was unpatriotic, they were all western spies, you know that kind of rhetoric. We were told by the top management. You know even Pavkovic himself was making a tour around the army saying these things . and his associates as well.”

Throughout the Serbian police forces as well, “Otpor was presented as some kind of red terrorists...I can say that when it comes to Otpor, our assessment was the worst, and we made the majority of the errors...we were under political influence.”<sup>144</sup>

Politically, the unification of the broad-based and previously fractured DOS coalition around nationalist Vojislav Kostunica helped to counter this charge. A local analyst recalls that Milosević finally went out on the stump, labeling the opposition leaders “rabbits, rats, and even hyenas” loyal to the NATO masters “who bribe and pay them.” Yet he was unable to say anything specific about Kostunica.<sup>145</sup> One interviewee argued that Kostunica was considered a palatable choice by members of the security establishment who felt that by 2000, he and his colleagues were “sick” of the familiar opposition faces from the 1990s and that Kostunica, unlike them, “was never compromised.”<sup>146</sup> In fact, acceptability within the security forces was explicitly on the minds of those opposition politicians who supported Kostunica as the DOS candidate. One source recalls Djinjic mentioning to him after October 5th that although any of the DOS members could have potentially won the general election, Kostunica was chosen because he was the one least likely to provoke a backlash within the VJ.<sup>147</sup>

Support of the nationalist Serbian Orthodox Church also bolstered challengers’ credibility within the politically conservative ranks of the security establishment. The church had called publicly on Kostunica to assume the mantle of the presidency following the September 24<sup>th</sup> elections and met prominently with the opposition and

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<sup>144</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal Interview. April 8, 2008

<sup>145</sup> de Krnjevic-Miskovic (2001), 104

<sup>146</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic, retired police officer, interview by author, Belgrade, 8/30/06. He also added that he and many of his colleagues “were disgusted by Covic, Djinjic, and Vuk Draskovic”

<sup>147</sup> Ken Wollack, comment Washington DC, January 18, 2009

General Pavkovic in the days immediately following October 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>148</sup> This support was particularly helpful as Otpor, the student organization, had come under considerable attack for its alleged lack of patriotism.<sup>149</sup> Their public relations responses were therefore wrapped heavily in patriotic rhetoric, and included slogans such as “Resistance: because I love Serbia.”<sup>150</sup> In light of the recent war in Kosovo and amidst the constant reminders provided by carcasses of bombed out buildings still defacing central Belgrade, organizers felt it was particularly important that messages to the military “emphasized that the opposition was not a ‘‘fifth column’ for NATO.”<sup>151</sup>

The sheer breadth of the movement also helped counteract claims made by the regime leadership. Otpor’s ability to attract new elements of society to their cause further contributed to perceptions of movement legitimacy. As one Otpor leader put it, the group considered its role to be that of “a strong position of glue within the fragments” of Serbian society.<sup>152</sup> The group thus took pains to include women and individuals from various age groups, and to include towns and region from throughout Serbia to represent a broad national cross-section.<sup>153</sup> By May 2000, the organization had accumulated about 20,000 members in over 100 towns throughout Serbia, only 60% of whom were students.<sup>154</sup> Otpor leaders believe that the organization was able to achieve this broad-based coalition in part because it sought to accomplish a finite objective and thus did not threaten the interests of its potential partners:

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<sup>148</sup> “Kostunica, Serbian Patriarch, Army Commander Pavkovic Arrive at Sava Center” BETA 10/07. Accessed from World News Connection on 2/15/08

<sup>149</sup> Propaganda attacks included, for example, posters with the label “Madeline Youth” and dollar signs in the traditional Otpor fist

<sup>150</sup> Matthew Collin *The Time of the Rebels: Youth Resistance Movements and 21st Century Revolutions* (Serpents Tail, 2007) 35.

<sup>151</sup> Binnendijk and Marovic (2006)

<sup>152</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>153</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>154</sup> Paulson (2005)

From the beginning, there was a clear statement that Otpor was not running for office. And our story was ‘okay, let’s get rid of Milosevic, and if you have arguments among yourself, do it afterwards.’ We were not endangering the free press - we didn’t want to publish our own newspapers. We were not endangering the labor unions, because we didn’t want to organize labor unions. We were not endangering the parties because we were not running for office.”<sup>155</sup>

Demonstrating its breadth, the opposition was able in 2000, for the first time, to convince workers to support them. The decision of the Kolubara miners to stand in solidarity with the political opposition also strengthened the perceived legitimacy of the movement. The strike was quickly branded by the regime as “anti-state sabotage” and an attack on Serbia’s security and defense capabilities of, while opposition leaders and independent media sources emphasized the heroism of the miners.<sup>156</sup> Throughout the standoff, opposition leaders took an active role in supporting miners, generating publicity and encouraging them to maintain the strike.<sup>157</sup> The decision of miners to engage in a strike sent a symbolic message to Serbian security forces. In the words of one police officer, the significance of the strike lay in the fact that, for the first time, a broad range of Serbs were willing to support the opposition.<sup>158</sup> As he later recalled,

Usually, during the 1990s, you had the people divided. On the one side, there were intellectuals, students, educated people were against Milosevic. On the other side, workers, farmers, they were the base for Milosevic. And in that moment at Kolubara, that was important just because of the fact that something happened. The fact that workers were against Milosevic was a very important fact.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>156</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal Interview. April 8, 2008. The government justified intervention by arguing that if the strike went on for a significant amount of time, thermo-electric plants would no longer be able to function. This in turn had defense implication, as without electricity “command systems in police and military would be damaged.”

<sup>157</sup> Kostunica visited the mines twice and other opposition leaders, including General Momcilo Perisic, General Vuk Obradovic Milan St. Protic, Goran Svilanovic, Nebojsa Covic, also came to demonstrate their support. These visits – particularly Kostunica’s – were heavily covered by independent daily news sources such as Danas and Blic. D Marinkovic (2003) 67.

<sup>158</sup> Major, Interior Ministry of Serbia. Personal Interview. March 7, 2008.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

The miners thus broadened the usual array of students, intellectuals, and disaffected politicians to include workers, indicating a shift from the traditional demographics of political protest in Serbia. The symbolism of the support was not lost on journalists at the time.<sup>160</sup> It also appears to have made an impression on high-ranking police officers. Noting that the “moment of the miners was one of the key elements of the [opposition] victory,” Stevanovic later observed that the involvement of Kolubara’s miners “gave the biggest flywheel to the protestors in a symbolic way.”<sup>161</sup>

Familiar faces also influenced the way that challengers were perceived by the security forces. The participation of former military and interior ministry officers in the ranks of the opposition added considerable credibility. On October 5<sup>th</sup>, for example, when a large column of protestors was stopped by a police blockade on the highway near Kraljevo, veterans of the Serbian wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo were asked to step forward. About 1,000 veterans came forward, and the blockade soon collapsed.<sup>162</sup> Similarly, the few military units deployed near the highways immediately recognized General Perisic as the former VJ chief, and soon directly stepped aside.<sup>163</sup> Retired generals such as Perisic and Obradovic also facilitated relationships between the opposition and the security forces more broadly. Perisic’s relative credibility within the General Staff also yielded concrete information – when a number of officers decided that “it would be the best to

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<sup>160</sup> One journalist reporting on the events noted, for example, that “in many respects, the purpose of the strike is not to put economic pressure on the government, as would usually be the case, but merely to demonstrate...support for the opposition” Steve Crawshaw, “Miners take Milosevic to the edge of meltdown,” *The Independent*, 4 October 2000, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/miners-take-milosevic-to-the-edge-of-meltdown-635106.html>

<sup>161</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal Interview. April 8, 2008

<sup>162</sup> Roger Cohen “From a Summons to a Slap: How the Fight in Yugoslavia Was Won” *The New York Times*, 10/14/00

<sup>163</sup> General Momcilo Perisic. Interview. Belgrade, April 9, 2008.

pass on the information we had directly to the Serbian opposition” they agreed that Perisic “should be the man who the data should be delivered to.”<sup>164</sup>

Individual relationships helped to build the trust needed to elicit leaks of information, promises of inaction and other forms of subversion. In one example, professor Zoran Dragasic, a professor at the Belgrade Security Academy and a member of General Vuk Obradovic’s Social Democracy Party, had many students who were serving as police officers in Belgrade. He recalls that, as the post election crisis unfolded, many students that he had “recognized as [politically] passive became active at that time” and began approaching him about their support for the opposition and, later, with concrete facts.<sup>165</sup> Vulevic’s uncle, Zoran Buskovic, was captain of police in the city of Cacak during that time, and had developed a positive relationship with Ilic over the months prior to October 5th. This relationship formed the basis for “special communications” between Vulevic and Ilic’s team. *Ad hoc* relationships were also established with individuals in the lower and middle-ranking levels of the VJ, although, as Nebojsa Covic recalls, “we didn’t have any positive relations with the highest levels of the military.”<sup>166</sup>

Ultimately, the individual relationships that appear to have been particularly effective in altering perceptions of opposition legitimacy were familial. As was mentioned in numerous interviews, the broad appeal of Otpor – particularly to youth – meant that “in a lot of families, the father would be an officer, the kids would support the opposition.”<sup>167</sup> Indeed, the fact that many military families had embraced the opposition was highlighted

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<sup>164</sup> Vladan Vlajkovic, *Military Secret (Part I)* (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia: Belgrade, 2004) 79.

<sup>165</sup> Zoran Dragasic, Personal interview. April 4, 2008.

<sup>166</sup> Nebojsa Covic. Personal interview. April 10, 2008.

<sup>167</sup> Colonel, Military Intelligence, Republic of Serbia. Personal Interview. February 20, 2008.

as a potential problems by members of the VJ General Staff.<sup>168</sup> Noting with particular concern the prevalence of the Otpor activists, senior officers expressed concerns there might yield direct implications for the military's willingness to obey orders.<sup>169</sup> They were right to be concerned. Over the course of the campaign, opposition forces had long been, in the words of one civil society activist, "very conscious" of who was related to individuals in the police or armed forces, and deliberately worked to engage these individuals.<sup>170</sup>

Finally, Otpor's explicit commitment to nonviolent tactics and efforts to improve relations with individuals in the security forces also appears to have helped them to surmount biases within the security forces and decrease "social distance."

Chief of Military intelligence General Branko Krga later emphasized the significance of the predominantly nonviolent tenor of the protests on October 5th: "We didn't have a case of provocation, even though they were passing by our barracks. They were well behaved, very correct."<sup>171</sup> Over the course of the months prior to October 5<sup>th</sup>, Otpor leaders had pursued explicit strategies to improve the group's relationships with Serbia's

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<sup>168</sup> Gen. Svetozar Marjanovic is said to have stated that "they ought to work with the people in the barracks because if they don't, I wish to assure, we're bound to discover later that most of them have gone astray for lack of the right kind of information. Because the officers do not make a point of keeping their families informed, we've got a situation where the son thinks and does one thing, the wife another and the husband just doesn't know what to do. I think that there's a lot of work to be done in this regard, this matter must be looked into and seen to" Vladan Vlajkovic, *Military Secret (Part I)* (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia: Belgrade, 2004) 54

<sup>169</sup> Recall Pavkovic's concern, for example, that "Surprises are not to be ruled out. We should not rule out the possibility of certain people at all levels of command surprising us. Perhaps younger soldiers who have relatives in Otpor... junior officers who also have relatives etc, or have been deluded for various reasons," Vladan Vlajkovic, *Military Secret (Part I)* (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia: Belgrade, 2004)

<sup>170</sup> Milijenko Dereta. Personal interview. April 11, 2008.

<sup>171</sup> Branko Krga. Personal Interview. April 7, 2008.

security forces. On security holidays, Otpor activists had presented flowers to soldiers and policemen.<sup>172</sup>

In internal Otpor meetings, they frequently noted the importance of maintaining polite relationships with the police: “so some commander says you are a terrorist, but the officer says ‘you are not terrorist... you are like my daughter.’ While calling officers “dogs” had been common during the antagonistic student-police standoffs of the 1990s, protestors shouted the refrain “go blue!” in 2000 in reference both to the color of police uniforms and to the Serbian national basketball team.<sup>173</sup> So attitudes within the police started to change.”<sup>174</sup> Opposition politicians had also attempted to communicate directly with police officers in their towns, and had learned from previous failures that they would need to avoid violence if they were to win over security forces. As one former DoS recalls, he and his colleagues were actively “trying to convince the police to change sides. And if you follow this, you can see how this was not an accident in 2000, but a result of systematic communication.”<sup>175</sup>

Arrests had provided opportunities for Otpor members to interact directly and attempt to forge positive relationships with their local police officers.<sup>176</sup> Each arrest or detention was seen as an opening for activists to glean and assess information about prevailing

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<sup>172</sup> Paulson and Sharp (2005)

<sup>173</sup> Popovic recalls “The Serbian national team wears a blue uniform. At basketball games, the audience yells “Plav Vi”, or “go blue”... the funny thing was that the police had blue uniforms, so when we yelled it, it was like we were supporting them. Everybody know what “pla vi” meant in Serbia. So instead of provoking police, demonstrators were taught to coopt them, to say “come with us.” Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>174</sup> Ivan Adric. Personal interview. August 30, 2006.

<sup>175</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>176</sup> For example, Ivan Adric, another founding member of Otpor recalled one arrest: The guy who arrested me... I knew him from the rallies and from football games. His interrogation was like “Hey Ivan, what’s up... in his office was a sticker saying “Gotov je!” [“He is Finished”] He asked me “still not married?” And I said no, not married. And he said “date of birth still the same?” Then he said “what do you think is going to happen with the elections?” We talked for a little while about that.” Ivan Adric. Personal interview. August 30, 2006.

“moods” within their local police forces.<sup>177</sup> It also offered the chance to correct erroneous negative perceptions perpetuated by the regime.<sup>178</sup> As strategist Srdja Popovic recalls:

At the beginning, they didn’t know what Otpor was, so they were afraid. They tried to find out what it was, who was giving money, why we were doing it, and whether the plan was to have violent revolution. When you live in dictatorship, paranoia levels are high. An armed revolution would be attack on the constitution. They were afraid, they didn’t know what to do, and so they were very aggressive. And then, by the time they had arrested 46,000 people, they knew what we were about.<sup>179</sup>

Otpor thus worked to systematically address preconceived notions within the police forces. To prepare and take full advantage of arrests over the course of the campaign, coordinators had distributed pamphlets to activists with standardized responses about the organization’s goals, methods, and structure that prompted a uniform response when they were interrogated. Srdja Popovic recalls the tactic: “We made 100,000 copies, and every member of Otpor got it. All gave the same answer. And the police started to respect the people from Otpor.”<sup>180</sup> Because of their nonviolent stance, Otpor was able to respond with humor when the regime declared the group a terrorist organization. After the regime announcement, Otpor leaders sent out “thousands of clean-cut kids, well-known in their communities, wearing T-shirts with the words: “Otpor Terrorist.”<sup>181</sup> Using humor and

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<sup>177</sup> Binnendijk and Marovic (2006)

<sup>178</sup> Binnendijk and Marovic (2006) Otpor hoped that this iconography would especially irritate Mirjana Markovic, Milosevic’s wife and leader of the Yugoslav Left. Press releases issued by the Yugoslav Left soon showed that the impact of Otpor’s iconography exceeded all expectations. Indeed, one classified document issued by the Analytics Directorate resembled press releases issued by the Yugoslav Left: “with their dressing style (black caps and scarves, trousers and black T-shirts) members of this organization resemble dark past and Nazi ideology which brought this nation huge suffering and evil.” (“Information on illegal activities of the fascist-terrorist organization Otpor”, Analytics Directorate, Ministry of Interior, Belgrade, June 7, 2000). In fact, strategists made a stylistic decision to adopt the logo of clenched fist and black T-shirts. The goal was to look dangerous but remain nonviolent in order to deceive high-ranking government officials while providing the correct information to police officers

<sup>179</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>180</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>181</sup> “A Force More Powerful” Online at <http://www.aforce more powerful.org/films/bdd/story/index.php>.

consistent messaging to correct misperceptions, Otpor leaders hoped that police officers would begin to question the motives of the government and give some credibility to the activists' message.

Over time, although orders for arrests continued, police officers did develop a better understanding of Otpor's intentions and nonviolent approach. From anecdotal evidence, this effort appears to have been successful for many within the local police forces. One police official recalled that of his colleagues, "most were looking at Otpor members with positive feelings. Hope was rising that certain things could be changed. They did not care who was in power – they just wanted the abuse to stop."<sup>182</sup> In this environment, he believed, "many perceived Otpor's message very positively."<sup>183</sup>

### **Strategic Objective III: Raise the Costs of Repression**

During the strikes at Kolubara and in the streets of Belgrade, the perceived costs of repression were high for individuals within the security forces. Large crowds, the presence of media attention, and, sometimes, the presence of members of their own families in the crowds made the implications of violent action prohibitive. Earlier in the campaign as well, steps taken by Otpor to communicate about and swiftly respond to repression had helped to raise its costs.

The importance of costs of repression is illustrated by Otpor's change in tactics over time. Early on, before they were able to significantly increase the costs of repression, Otpor leaders had encouraged activists to avoid contact with security forces and keep protest activities to a minimum. Otpor organizer Ivan Andric recalls that, in the early days, the organization "decided not to do anything because we were afraid for

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<sup>182</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia. Personal interview, August 20, 2006.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

peoples' lives... the strategy for most of this time was to avoid clashes with police, to avoid meeting the police, to try to escape, not to have any connection with police.”<sup>184</sup> Otpor coordinators explicitly recognized that such a power imbalance would compromise their ability to take initiative during their struggle – as Adric later recalled, “at that point, you are in the position of the victim. That is not good because you need to be proactive, to have initiative. You must lead the game, but the victim does not lead the game.”<sup>185</sup>

Over the course of 2000, Otpor worked to raise the costs of repression for individuals in the local police. In the months prior to October 5<sup>th</sup>, the explicitly nonviolent stance taken by the group and its broader civil society coalition had also been critical in minimizing the impact of the “backfire” or “political jiu-jitsu” dynamic. As the head of one affiliated NGO put it, this dynamic proved to be one area in which “Otpor played an important part – it was seen differently than other kind of opposition activities. People became very paternalistic – you are beating our children.”<sup>186</sup> Afterwards, General Stevanovic acknowledges that “maybe that’s where lies the answer of the unexpected success that Otpor had later on in the development of the events...all the repressive measures that were taken against Otpor...gave significance to Otpor...actually they had a counter-effect.”<sup>187</sup> Another officer recalls that “We had top management meetings and I said this is not good we are attacking children...old people are sensitive to children. It’s one thing to arrest Vuk Draskovic and blame him for everything, and its another thing to start arresting kids from high school.”<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Ivan Adric. Personal interview. August 30, 2006.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Miljenko Dereta. Personal interview. April 11, 2008.

<sup>187</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

<sup>188</sup> Senior official, SDB (former). Personal interview. April 7, 2008.

Social censure within the communities was a particularly relevant tool in responding to local police who used excessive force against activists. Popovic recalls that “it was important to target those officers who were prepared to beat or torture our activists.”<sup>189</sup> For those who did, the penalty was social censure:

There will be a fist on your door telling the world that a butcher lives here. On your door. Their kids were boycotted in school. We will post pictures showing that this guy has beaten two underage kids yesterday, or gave orders to do it. In every single street, your wife will go buy supplies, she will be embarrassed, your kids will see your picture. Perhaps your colleagues will think twice before doing these things.<sup>190</sup>

Attention by independent media outlets had also helped to raise the costs of regime violence by publicizing arrests and acts of brutality throughout the campaign.<sup>191</sup> Awareness of their communities’ reactions to a crackdown also appears to have spurred junior VJ officers to clearly demarcate their unwillingness to use force – one unit captain remembers the parents of his soldiers calling frequently and asking how they planned to respond to demonstrators on October 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>192</sup>

Otpor’s ability to rapidly mobilize community networks in response to police activity further raised the ‘costs’ of arrests. Immediately after an activist was arrested, witnesses would call an Otpor hotline to quickly inform local networks of supporters and independent media sources of the event. Regional coordinators then immediately rallied groups of protesters to challenge local police stations and “name and shame” local police officers. As a result, those detained were often released within hours, inspiring new activists to risk arrest. The tactic was explicitly noted by General Pavkovic, who lamented the phenomenon during one meeting in mid-2000, observing “Well, fine, they will start; they will use every conflict with them for their

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<sup>189</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>190</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>191</sup> Ivan Adric. Personal interview. August 30, 2006.

<sup>192</sup> Former VJ captain, interviewed, Belgrade, 8/23/06

own purposes. If those, those leaders got arrested, they would gather around the prison, and we would have the same thing.<sup>193</sup>

Discussion of the potential costs of repression would be incomplete without consideration of the possibility of demonstrator violence. Although Otpor consistently renounced violence under any circumstances, some individuals within the DOS political coalition had collected arms as a potential last resort to raise the costs of repression. Belgrade Mayor Nebojsa Covic now openly acknowledges a weapons cache he had stored outside of Belgrade for potential use in self-defense.<sup>194</sup> Velimir Ilic, whose entourage included individuals with police and military training, has stated that arms were hidden in some of the vehicles he lead along the Ibar highway.<sup>195</sup> Several DOS leaders believe in retrospect that the weapons they brought helped to deter police violence.<sup>196</sup>

However, the relative utility of the latent threat of violence in increasing the costs of repression were ultimately weighed against the dangers and downsides that it presented. First, police chiefs appear to have been largely unimpressed by arms amassed by DOS. When asked about the role of the weapons in shaping police decision-making, one senior Belgrade police officer laughed and responded that any claims that they played a significant role were “rubbish.”<sup>197</sup> General Stevanovic similarly dismissed their consequence, remarking that relative to the capabilities of the police forces, ‘the amount of weapons [DOS] had were really low.’<sup>198</sup> Leaders of Otpor similarly dismiss the arms cache as tangential at best.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Vladan Vlajkovic, *Military Secret (Part II)* (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia: Belgrade, 2004) 238

<sup>194</sup> Nebojsa Covic, Personal interview. April 10, 2008; Marshall (2003) 213

<sup>195</sup> Velimir Ilic, Personal interview. April 8, 2008., Nebojsa Covic stored a cache of weapons in his factory in the Belgrade suburbs.

<sup>196</sup> Milan St Protic, Interview, Belgrade, 4/10/08; Former DOS official Interview, Washington DC, 1/21/08

<sup>197</sup> Senior police officer, Republic of Serbia. Personal Interview. April 9, 2008.

<sup>198</sup> Branislav Obradovic. Personal Interview. April 4, 2008.

<sup>199</sup> Ivan Marovic. Personal Interview. February 10, 2008.

More importantly, it was widely understood that an outbreak of violence posed a significant threat to the most powerful weapon that challengers had in their arsenal - their numbers.<sup>200</sup> DOS politicians were also aware that had the crowds realized their plans for potential armed conflict, fears of getting caught in crossfire would have kept people home. As one former DOS official recalls, “we didn’t tell anybody about it, of course.”<sup>201</sup> Velimir Ilic, who had developed a contingency plan including the use of armed force similarly acknowledges that “the crowd didn’t know the plan”<sup>202</sup> Throughout the campaign Otpor leaders had realized that their ability to peacefully mobilize the broader Serbian population represented their strongest relative advantage against the regime.<sup>203</sup>

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, the massive numbers of Serbian citizens that gathered on the streets of Belgrade provided critical deterrent against attacks. Although police officers’ internal radio channels were announcing a crowd size of about 70,000, officers on the streets recognized that the actual number was at least 700,000.<sup>204</sup> Unsurprisingly, this fact was publicly referenced by opposition leaders as they warned the military against entering the streets of Belgrade. One declared, for example that “I don’t think any normal person would attempt to send the army against a million people. That would come back to whoever gave such an order. We call upon the army to remain in the barracks”<sup>205</sup> Serbian military intelligence officers in the crowds were reporting back to their headquarters that “those people are serious

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Democratic Opposition of Serbia official (former). Personal interview. January 21, 2008.

<sup>202</sup> Velimir Ilic, cited in Marshall (2003) 213.

<sup>203</sup> Indeed, at the beginning of their struggle, before Otpor had been able to generate the numbers needed to significantly raise the costs of repression, coordinators attempted to avoid interactions with the police entirely. The reasoning was that, in the words of one coordinator, “at that point, you are in the position of the victim. That is not good because you need to be proactive, to have initiative. You must lead the game, but the victim does not lead the game.” Ivan Adric, interview, Belgrade August 30, 2006.

<sup>204</sup> Dragan Bujosevic and Ivan Radovanovic (2003) 31; Thompson and Kuntz (2004) 168

<sup>205</sup> Democratic Center president Dragoljub Micunovic stated that it was important for them and “army officers to agree about everything that is essential for the security of the state not to be threatened,” Democratic Center Leader Warns of Danger of Anarchy in Serbia BETA, October 5, 2000.

– there are too many out here.”<sup>206</sup>

Crowd size appeared to have proved particularly critical in deterring violent action by those parts of the security apparatus willing to fire. *Vreme* journalist Dejan Anastasijevic said it was the only thing that prevented a violent crackdown by the JSO. “If you didn’t have such a big turnout, you would have had another Tiananmen in Belgrade, there’s no question. If it was like 50,000, 60,000 anything up to 100,000... but if you have over 100,000 you just can’t fire on them. On the last day, it just came out to numbers.”<sup>207</sup>

Crowds had also proved useful in increasing the costs of repression at Kolubara. Tips from contacts within the SAJ police unit offered advance notice of police movements.<sup>208</sup> Opposition and union leaders would then use their cell-phones to rally contacts from Belgrade and other nearby cities, and within an hour, thousands of citizens would surround police lines.<sup>209</sup> According to the SAJ officer, his colleagues quickly “lost initiative” when confronted with the large number of civilians bused in to the area.<sup>210</sup> General Stevanovic noted that with increased numbers at the mines, it became evident that breaking the strike without violence, “was mission impossible.”<sup>211</sup> Citing the police reaction to Kolubara as the first major indication to the international community that the

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<sup>206</sup> US Defense Intelligence Agency officer (ret.) Personal Interview, March 14 2008

<sup>207</sup> Dejan Anastasijevic. Personal interview. August 30, 2006. Anastasijevic further observed that there were “paramilitary groups , but they were small in number. JSO, however, fearsome they were, were just active service was about 200 people, not more than that. And maybe 2-300 more if they called up reserves. Even if they have all the fancy hummers and the fire power,,, even so against several hundred thousand...””

<sup>208</sup> A secret message – “my mother is very ill, please sent medicine” – was used between SAJ deputy commander Vulevic Spasoje and Cacak mayor Velimir Ilic to signal that the opposition should bring more demonstrators. Colonel Vulevic Spasoje. Personal interview, May 12, 2008. On the night of October 4<sup>th</sup>, he recalls, he realized after a meeting between his boss Branko and a colleague that “So I immediately called my friend – a guy in another other unit – gave him the telephone number for my uncle, send message to Velimir Ilic that he should bring people.

<sup>209</sup> de Krnjevic-Miskovic (2001). The tactic would prove particularly significant the following evening, on October 4<sup>th</sup>, when 200 special police officers from Belgrade’s Banovo Brdo district were sent to force strikers out of the mines. Buses of civilians were quickly mobilized from Belgrade, Cacak, Milanovic, Valjeo, Obrenovac, and Ljig. Bujosevic and Radovanovic (2003) 2; Marinkovic (2003)

<sup>210</sup> Colonel Vulevic Spasoje. Personal interview. May 12, 2008.

<sup>211</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

police might step down during protests, US Ambassador Bill Montgomery later observed that “it took the miners standing up for themselves, refusing to give in, daring the police to escalate the level of violence necessary for them to back down. And the police blinked.”<sup>212</sup>

Regime members were also acutely aware of the implications of media coverage. At Kolubara, crowd of twenty reporters from local and international news outlets had ensured that any police violence would quickly be transmitted.<sup>213</sup> One Serbian analyst argues that the media attention devoted to the strikes “certainly had some impact on the army and police in their final decision not to use force.”<sup>214</sup> The regime appears to have made efforts to limit press access as October 5<sup>th</sup> approached. Tim Marshall, a Sky journalist covering Serbia at the time, recalls that his visa was rescinded in the run-up to October 5<sup>th</sup>. He discovered, after making a few phone calls, that other members of the media had the same problem. He believes his visa was intentionally blocked because it “was clear that the regime realized that there could be trouble on the way and that if they suppressed it with violence, they didn’t want the media around to see it.”<sup>215</sup> These apparent efforts to reduce media coverage were superseded, however, by the sheer size of the crowds, which would have made any violent crackdown difficult to conceal.

Finally, for many members of the police forces and military, violent action against demonstrators also carried significant potential personal costs. This proved to be the case

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<sup>212</sup> Ambassador Bill Montgomery. Telephone interview, April 20, 2008.

<sup>213</sup> Bujosevic and Radovanovic (2003) 22; “Miners Remove Serbian Police Barricade Outside Tamnava Mine” *BETA*, October 4, 2000.

<sup>214</sup> Marinkovic (2003) 68; Regular announcements on Radio Lazarevac kept nearby citizens apprised of the events at Kolubara, and to rally them when necessary. Bujosevic and Radovanovic (2003) 22

<sup>215</sup> Marshall recalled that “the world’s media was not invited to witness the event and very few journalists managed to get visas. I had been told by the Foreign ministry that Sky’s reporting over the previous few years had been fair and that I would be allowed in to cover the election. … It was therefore a nasty surprise when my application was denied.” Marshall (2003) 205.

at Kolubara, where even relatively senior police officers later reported that their wives and family friends had joined the crowd around the miners.<sup>216</sup> On October 5<sup>th</sup>, as noted above, the fact that the crowds drew from across Serbia meant that many officers – even those from outside Belgrade - had friends and family in the crowds. Stories of neighbors and even brothers on opposite sides of the barricades in Belgrade on October 5th are ubiquitous.<sup>217</sup> Officers later observed that these personal relationships considerably personalized the costs of repression. As one military colonel noted, “if young officers have their friends, colleagues from their youth, on the other side of the cordon, they are less likely to do anything.”<sup>218</sup> In families where the kids actively supported the opposition, “the least a father can do is to say there will be no pressure from the military.”<sup>219</sup>

#### ***Strategic Objective IV: Mitigate the Costs of Accommodation***

Throughout the campaign, there had been tangible costs involved in defying the regime by assisting the opposition or permitting it political space. Costs of accommodating the opposition were high. Police or SDB officers who refused orders risked their professional livelihoods. One former police officer put in explicit terms: “I was never for Milosevic, but... I must say that I had a good job, I was well-paid with good conditions for that time, and we tried to perform our orders.”<sup>220</sup> Most had been trained since adolescence to serve in the police and were thus unwilling to engage in actions that

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<sup>216</sup> Senior police officer, Republic of Serbia. Personal Interview. April 9, 2008.

<sup>217</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>218</sup> Colonel, Military Intelligence, Republic of Serbia. Personal Interview. March 13, 2008.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic, retired police officer, interview by author, Belgrade, 8/30/06

would threaten what they perceived to be their only means of livelihood.<sup>221</sup> An SDB officer observed that as economic and political conditions had worsened in Serbia, “motivations changed to how you can survive. How you can sustain your family, and then how you can not be arrested by your own people or killed and left somewhere in a ditch.”<sup>222</sup>

Post-transition professional costs were also an area in which the Milosevic regime and opposition politicians appeared to compete. One woman working in a senior position in the armed forces later acknowledged that “everyone in the army” had been reminded before the election that Mr. Kostunica had vowed to “professionalize” and slash the size of the army. “The message was, ‘Think about your job before you vote,’ ” she said.<sup>223</sup> To counter this message, DOS politicians made “made face-to-face contacts” with representatives of the police and military forces, attempting to “persuade them that they shared the same problems with the Serbian people. Also, we were persuading them that new democratic government would make a professional and strong system of police, military and security forces” that would ultimately benefit individuals within the security forces.<sup>224</sup>

Closer to October 5<sup>th</sup>, it is also likely that discussions that occurred between Djinjic and JSO leader Legija included a pledge from Djinjic to maintain continuity within JSO. Michael McFaul reports that Djinjic also conducted negotiations with General Pavkovic on October 4<sup>th</sup>, promising that in return for a pledge against military intervention, “the

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<sup>221</sup> Colonel, Military Intelligence, Republic of Serbia. Personal Interview. March 13, 2008; Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Republic of Serbia. Personal interview. April 3, 2008.

<sup>222</sup> Senior official, SDB (former). Personal interview. April 7, 2008.

<sup>223</sup> Roger Cohen “From a Summons to a Slap: How the Fight in Yugoslavia Was Won” *The New York Times*, 10/14/00

<sup>224</sup> Zoran Zivkovic, Email correspondence. April 30, 2008.

new government would not purge the ranks of the power ministries.”<sup>225</sup> Although the second set of negotiations has not been confirmed, it is notable that both Legija and Pavkovic maintained their positions – and JSO remained after October 5<sup>th</sup>. One can understand the pre-transition logic of attempts to reduce costs of accommodation. However, as discussed above, both Legija and Pavkovic appeared to have been willing to use force on October 5<sup>th</sup>, but were stymied by lack of cooperation within their own ranks or other security institutions. Additionally, as a result of the continuity in leadership, reform in the power ministries moved very slowly. To this day, remains problematic. In light of this fact and the March 2003 assassination of Djinjic, which Legija was later found guilty of arranging, any concessions to these individuals, allowing them to remain in power during the post-transition period, were a mistake.

Amnesty for past abuses was also relevant for individuals who had reason to fear justice or retribution under a new government. There are reports that the US had at one point unofficially offered Milosevic amnesty from the International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia in return for stepping down, but Milosevic had refused.<sup>226</sup> More broadly, amnesty themes ran through periodic public announcements during the course of October 5<sup>th</sup>, during which demonstrators were asked to “give a little bit more time to the policemen to think everything over and to take our side. We will then forgive them

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<sup>225</sup> This claim was not confirmed in discussions with Serbian security experts.

<sup>226</sup> Marshall (2003) 190 “The message was passed in Budapest to senior Yugoslav government representatives by people from the UN, but really the offer was from the Americans. The deal was: Tell Slobo not to worry about the Hague War Crime indictment. We’ll make sure that they don’t come after him, but if he doesn’t want to play ball then we’ll keep pushing. All he has to do is call and election, lose it, and then retire gracefully. He can even keep some of the money, but he has to understand that it is over. Milosevic allegedly point-blank refused. Marshall cites a “Serbian reporter who has good journalistic contacts with the Yugoslav Military Intelligence” as his source.

everything, both beatings and tear gas."<sup>227</sup>

During the course of the demonstrations, Otpor members clearly recognized that security forces were responsible for public safety and would be held accountable if chaos broke out during protest events. Acknowledging the mistakes that had been made in the early 1990s, when clashes between police and protestors became violent, the organization had trained its followers to avoid property damage and other provocative behaviors during the actions and rallies preceding October 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>228</sup>

Thus, while the images of bulldozers breaking through police barricades will have a permanent place in the books and films on the events, private reassurances behind the scenes also helped to avoid violence on the road to Belgrade. Individuals leading the protests had, in the words of one police officer, "realized they had to be closer to police. They first contacted police officers on the way who were blocking the road, saying we don't want to fight with you, we just want [Milosevic.] We are going to Belgrade."<sup>229</sup> The officer argued that this communication that was a key contact because it denied any desire to fight.<sup>230</sup> When faced with crowd that could potentially turn violent, he said, "you always have some kind of personal dilemma, because you are a professional. But when it comes to a situation with rioting, it becomes a very personal thing. When you get a rock thrown at your head, it becomes very personal."<sup>231</sup>

Fear was also a factor. As Belgrade Chief of Police Bosko Buha later observed, conditions of fear can rapidly prompt an escalatory conflict: "They're scared, they've got

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<sup>227</sup> "Opposition Leader Appeals to Belgrade Demonstrators Not To Provoke Police." Belgrade BETA 10/5/00. G-17 Plus Coordinator Predrag Markovic "I appeal to you not to throw rocks at the police. There has been an incident because someone threw something at a policeman. They belong to us, they must be with the people and do not provoke any incidents,"

<sup>228</sup> Binnendijk and Marovic (2006)

<sup>229</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Republic of Serbia. Personal interview. April 8, 2008.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

a bullet in the barrel and when one goes off somewhere – once the first round is fired, there's chaos.”<sup>232</sup> On October 5<sup>th</sup>, Covic, who met with police officers – including Buha – who were hiding from the crowds in civilian apartments above the streets recalls that they “were scared, and ready to shoot to protect themselves.”<sup>233</sup>

The surging crowds in Belgrade had similarly prompted concerns within the Ministry of Defense.<sup>234</sup> Chief of Military Intelligence General Branko Krga observed afterwards that an outbreak of violence was the most plausible scenario under which military units might be engaged. Although he had come out strongly against military involvement before and during the protests, Krga was acutely aware of the danger of “provocation” and was closely “monitoring the protests.”<sup>235</sup> The VJ, he recalls, “could not be certain that demonstrators would provoke violence. They could have had too much liquor. When you have so many people in one place that can happen. There could have been demonstrators who wanted to provoke the army.”<sup>236</sup> General Krga also recalled that “if there were provocations against the military, they would respond accordingly.”<sup>237</sup> Aware that some within the Ministry of Defense would use clashes as an opportunity to crack down against the protests, Krga and his colleagues in military intelligence worked to play, in the words of one observer “a moderating role” within the ministry.<sup>238</sup>

Some concerns about potential escalation appear to have been justified. Amplifying this fear were false reports of police casualties broadcast over police airwaves.<sup>239</sup> Although no police officers were killed during the events of October 5<sup>th</sup>, there were

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<sup>232</sup> Bosko Buha, Chief of Belgrade Police. Quoted in Bujosevic and Radovanovic (2003) 18

<sup>233</sup> Nebojsa Covic. Personal interview. April 10, 2008.

<sup>234</sup> Branko Krga. Personal Interview. April 7, 2008.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> US Defense Intelligence Agency officer (ret.) Personal Interview, March 14 2008.

<sup>239</sup> Bujosevic and Radovanovic (2003) 127

media reports afterwards of some beatings by crowds.<sup>240</sup> Rumors of violence also contributed to instability. As noted earlier, some DOS political leaders, concerned about potential use of violence against them, had secretly collected weapons to bring with them on the road to Belgrade.<sup>241</sup> Reports of arms caches and injured officers amplified fears that the demonstrations might become violent.

In contrast, any demonstrators Otpor dispatched to police stations and military barracks, on October 5<sup>th</sup> were under strict orders to treat troops civilly and avoid provocation.<sup>242</sup> Throughout the course of the day, DOS leaders also made periodic announcements that the security forces “belong to us” urged the crowds to avoid throwing rocks or engaging in other violent behaviors.<sup>243</sup> Others appealed to citizens to “give a little bit more time to the policemen to think everything over and to take our side. We will then forgive them everything, both beatings and tear gas.”<sup>244</sup>

Direct communication with police officers became particularly critical in diffusing fears and lowering the perceived costs of accommodation.<sup>245</sup> Nebojsa Covic, who was well-known to many officers because of his former position as mayor of Belgrade, was a natural point of

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<sup>240</sup> Bujosevic and Radovanovic (2003) 92-93

<sup>241</sup> Velimir Ilic, whose entourage included individuals with police and military training, recalls the arms that were hidden in the vehicles headed along the Ibar highway. Personal interview. April 2, 2008. Nebojsa Covic stored a cache of weapons in his factory in the Belgrade suburbs. Nebojsa Covic. Personal interview. April 10, 2008.

<sup>242</sup> Branko Krga,. Personal Interview. April 7, 2008. Bujosevic and Radovanovic (2003) 31.

<sup>243</sup> G-17 Plus Coordinator Predrag Markovic announced on the fifth: “I appeal to you not to throw rocks at the police. There has been an incident because someone threw something at a policeman. They belong to us, they must be with the people and do not provoke any incidents,” “Opposition Leader Appeals to Belgrade Demonstrators Not To Provoke Police.” *BETA* October 2005.

<sup>244</sup> Momcilo Perisic and Goran Svilanovic, engaged in negotiations at a Belgrade police station with \* Djuric, who agreed not to use force against protestors and said he had spoken to Police Minister Vlajko Stojiljkovic, who had made the same promise. Perisic and Svilanovic said that they would address the citizens assembled in front of the Belgrade Assembly, and ask them not to loot shops.

<sup>245</sup> “The police asked Covic to come so they can surrender. The police were very scared they protected them from the people – the people wanted to beat them.” Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia.. Personal interview, August 20, 2006.

contact.<sup>246</sup> Covic recalls the meeting clearly: “We went in, sat down with them. We spoke for an hour and guaranteed that nothing would happen to them. And then together with the police, we created patrols to protect Belgrade from stealing actually.”<sup>247</sup> He also noted that he had brought retired police officers with him in the streets in order to communicate with individuals in the police lines: “We came with our policeman, and made a deal. No problem. They came on our side.”<sup>248</sup> DOS leaders continued to meet with police officials to gain assurance that the police would not attack, and to reinforce their pledge to maintain order on the streets.<sup>249</sup>

General Perisic assisted with communications to the VJ by making calls to individuals in the Ministry of Defense asking them to do “everything in their power to prevent bloodshed and conflicts with the army.” As one participant later wrote, “we had only one goal, to prevent a counter attack and conflicts with VJ and MUP units. Although he said that he was not in direct contact with the opposition, General Krga was aware that some communication was taking place, and attributes the lack of “provocation” in part to this interaction. “I think some officers at lower levels were in contact with these organizations,” he later recalled. “So obviously there was some coordination of activities, because demonstrators were not provoking the military.”<sup>250</sup>

### **Strategic Objective V: Demonstrate Likelihood of Success**

During the period after the presidential election in September, there was an intense battle to seize momentum. Senior military commanders had sent the message down the ranks

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<sup>246</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia.. Personal interview, August 20, 2006.

<sup>247</sup> Nebojsa Covic. Personal interview. April 10, 2008.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> “Police Minister Assures DOS Leaders Police Not To Intervene” *BETA* October 5, 2000.

<sup>250</sup> Branko Krga, interview, Belgrade 4/7/08. Krga recalls the “two generals in DOS – Perisic and Obradovic – so after the changes they told me that they had contacts, telephone talks, conversation with people in the military. And it contributed to avoiding provocation.”

that “everything was under control, and Mr. Milosevic would prevail.”<sup>251</sup> It was unsurprising that they attempted to convey this message – in the final days and hours of the “Bulldozer Revolution,” challengers’ ability to demonstrate likelihood of success was arguably the most significant factor in altering utilitarian calculations for individuals within the Serbian security forces. As Hillary Clinton’s team learned in the 2008 Democratic primary in the United States, it is impossible to wish an “aura of inevitability” into existence. It can only be born of a perceived advantage so significant that a snowball effect occurs. In the final hours, those inclined to remain loyal altered their stance when they saw the size and breadth of the coalition mobilized in support of the challengers and the increasing fissures within their own institutions.

Once again, numbers mattered. In addition to bolstering challenger legitimacy and magnifying the costs of repression and, the size and the composition of the crowds was crucial to Strategic Objective V. It conveyed an aura of inevitability. Calculations about the probability of success almost certainly influenced regime loyalists such as Legija and the JSO. In fact, anecdotal reports indicate that in the interaction between Djinjic and Legija on October 4<sup>th</sup>, it was openly acknowledged that “if there were only up to 50,000, [JSO] would shoot. If the numbers were overwhelming they wouldn’t be able to do anything.”<sup>252</sup> For others already sympathetic to the protestors, the dramatic effect of such a large mass of citizens in Belgrade altered the calculations involved in disobeying orders to repress the protests.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Roger Cohen “From a Summons to a Slap: How the Fight in Yugoslavia Was Won” *The New York Times*, October 14, 2000.

<sup>252</sup> Western diplomat. Personal interview, August 21, 2006

<sup>253</sup> Similarly civilians, were more likely to participate as more of their peers took to the streets. Josh Tucker cites Thompson and Kuntz’s observation that “People showed greater readiness to take part in anti-regime protests because such activities were now considered much more likely to succeed. The sense of powerlessness that had kept Serbian society paralyzed for so long gave way to a pervasive feeling of

Indeed, from the beginning of the day of October 5<sup>th</sup>, civilians marching to Belgrade were confident of their strength. After a decade of war, economic travails, and political repression, optimism was high that this would be a decisive moment in Serbian history. As a number of organizers of the events have since recalled, there was a strong belief within their ranks that this was “now or never.”<sup>254</sup> Their size contributed to this confidence, as did the presence of large numbers of military veterans within their ranks. Cacak mayor Velimir Ilic attributes his column’s success along the Ibar highway to the large “masses of people” with them, many of whom were former policemen, soldiers, and paratroopers, as well as athletes such as champion boxers and the top bodybuilder in the country.<sup>255</sup> He also noted that they were “very well-prepared.”<sup>256</sup> Both the large mass of people and the strategic planning that had been undertaken prior to the event served to reinforce the belief that this event would be, in the words of one police office “different... people weren’t just running around on the streets of Belgrade and swearing anymore.”<sup>257</sup>

Throughout the campaign, Otpor had constantly worked to project – and sometimes exaggerate – its own likelihood of success. During the February 2000 Otpor Congress, for example, the 700 participants “were portrayed as representatives from all over Serbia. They were actually only a few people in most places, like two or three. but it seemed like

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political possibility, as Milosevic’s image of omnipotence was fundamentally shaken” Tucker (2007) 18. Cites Thompson and Kuntz (2004) 168.

<sup>254</sup> Milan St. Protic. Personal Interview. April 10, 2008; Former Democratic Opposition of Serbia official. Personal Interview. January 21, 2008. Velimir Ilic. Personal interview. April 2, 2008.

<sup>255</sup> Velimir Ilic. Personal interview. April 2, 2008.

<sup>256</sup> Ilic recalls that “we had exercises in the town of Banja Luka on how to go through barricades. We also had many trainings in Budapest. We had the best instructors for these kinds of events. We were physically training ourselves Ilic recalls that he had.” established a team of young professionals, paratroopers from the Yugoslav Army and young policemen, and we coordinated this with the most elite units of the Interior Ministry Police in Belgrade. We got martial arts experts and professional boxers to join us. We even had plainclothes police coordinating with nearby towns.” Velimir Ilic, Interview, Belgrade, 4/8/08

<sup>257</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia.. Personal interview, August 20, 2006.

they were bigger groups. It's like coca-cola – never display your recipe.”<sup>258</sup> That month, Otpor activities were featured on the front pages of independent news sources - *Blic*, *Danas*, *Glas javnosti*, and *Vreme* – nearly every day. Organizer Ivan Adric noted, “that was a record, but also it illustrated how powerful we were.”<sup>259</sup> Otpor strategist Srdja Popovic strongly emphasized the importance of creating perceptions of success, noting later that:

If you can put 50,000 posters in two days in every village in Serbia, that leaves an impression of a very massive organization. And then you are talking to the police, and everyone else, as a strong organization. It was the perception – in the eyes of the police, and the regime, of what we were. And actually we were always making a bigger noise than we actually are.<sup>260</sup>

Although the movement was actually spearheaded by a self-proclaimed “oligarchy” of young veterans of previous student movements, these individuals worked to understate their significance within the organization and took precautions to protect themselves.<sup>261</sup> “This is why we protected the eleven,” remembers Popovic, “we had all these smoke screens. Once in March [2000] we physically met for the last time in our history... then we decided never to meet again.”<sup>262</sup> The apparent autonomy and sustainability of regional offices likely diminished the relative value of targeted violence against individual members. As another Otpor member put it: “The idea was, cut off one Otpor head, and another 15 heads would instantly appear.”<sup>263</sup> Otpor’s tactic of organizing mass demonstrations outside of police stations after arrests reinforced the movement’s perceived strength. As one activist later

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<sup>258</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Some actually left the country when they were tipped off about future threats.

<sup>262</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>263</sup> Roger Cohen, The Hidden Revolution: Who Really Brought Down Milosevic, *The New York Times Magazine*, 11/26/00 Cited in Sharp and Paulson (2005) 318

recalled, “we showed them that we could be arrested, and then come back to fight again and again”<sup>264</sup>

One of the major messages that Otpor had consistently tried to purvey, therefore, was the horizontal nature of its organizational structure and its ubiquity throughout Serbia. The objective appears to have been achieved. A policeman recalled his impressions of the organization: “Otpor was something undefined. Something in the air. It was something else, we would see these stickers...”<sup>265</sup> Another, observer quoted at the time, highlighted the strength of Otpor as a concept, rather than a concrete (and potentially vulnerable) structure: “Organizationally, how many people are in Otpor in Nis I cannot say. But how strong are they as an idea, as a movement -- that is easy to say. Otpor is everywhere. Otpor is an idea that young people embrace and struggle for with full force and full legitimacy.”<sup>266</sup> The fact that Otpor appeared both amorphous and ‘larger than life’ strengthened its position in relation to local police forces.<sup>267</sup>

Within the Ministry of Defense, as well, there appears to have been a shift. By the summer of 2000, according to military journalist Alexksandar Vucic:

The important thing was that there was some kind of understanding that one day, the opposition would win. You know, in our Federal Government buildings no one was reading [official newspaper] *Politika* anymore; instead they were reading the opposition papers *Blic*, and *Danas*. Everyone was trying to find someone to save them, and so, many of them caught that train.<sup>268</sup>

As challengers grew in strength and the loyalties of colleagues and subordinates became increasingly unclear, the leadership of the Interior Ministry and Ministry of Defense experienced

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<sup>264</sup> Sharp and Paulson (2005) 323

<sup>265</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia.. Personal interview, August 20, 2006.

<sup>266</sup> “Yugoslavia: Otpor Launches Get Out the Vote Campaign” Jolyon Naegele, *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty* July 18, 2000

<sup>267</sup> However, the secret police did maintain a list of key Otpor leaders. Ivan Andric recalls being brought to a police station during a normal arrest, then singled out from other activists by the agent for additional questioning. Ivan Adric. Personal interview. August 30, 2006.

<sup>268</sup> Marshall (2003) 198.

some transformation in their utilitarian calculations. The fact that troops might not comply with orders – or (worse) protect protestors, had been a growing concern of Pavkovic.<sup>269</sup> In a May meeting for example, he was bellicose. He said that some who were ill-informed were reporting a “rift between the military leadership and the troops” At the time he noted that “if this is so, then we should be hanged here as soon as we come out.”<sup>270</sup>

Nonetheless, he clearly continued to calculate risk. During one conversation in mid-2000, a general reporting to Pavkovic noted that he had received a letter from Nenad Canak the DOS representative from Vojvadina, stating “that he possessed reliable information, that he knew for sure that the lower ranking officers were not supporting us, and so on.”<sup>271</sup> Another noted a recent statement by General Perisic that “the majority of Army officers are against the Government in Belgrade,” wondering with concern whether Perisic might “know something more than we all do.”<sup>272</sup>

On the afternoon of October 5<sup>th</sup>, as Milosevic attempted to mobilize the army, a lack of confidence that orders would be obeyed almost certainly influenced the decision-making of Pavkovic. Pavkovic’s perceptions about the likelihood that his current boss would remain in power likely played into his decision to make a public statement following the elections that the VJ would remain neutral.<sup>273</sup> Opposition statements and warnings had particularly been calculated to exacerbate concerns about the loyalties of lower ranks – one author present at the time recalls that DOS politicians “kept warning that...one could never be sure that weapons

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<sup>269</sup> Citing “calls for the denial of obedience” Pavkovic proposed that “The Morale Directorate should send them an official letter, too. We should maybe carry out a routine control in relation to that, and so to see in a special way... to find that out. It might be that they managed to win some platoon commander over, or some lieutenant, or a tank commander,... he could take a tank, or go in it to the streets. That is a problem.

Vlajkovic (2004) Part I, 245.

<sup>270</sup> Vlajkovic (2004) Part I, 245. (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia: Belgrade, 2004) 245

<sup>271</sup> General Geza Farkas, cited in Vladan Vlajkovic, *Military Secret (Part I)* (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia: Belgrade, 2004) 227.

<sup>272</sup> Maj. General Alexander Vasiljevic cited in Vlajkovic (2004) Part I, 182.

<sup>273</sup> D’Aneiri (2006) 342.

would not be used first against the person who gave the order.”<sup>274</sup> According to one particularly telling report, as Milosevic was calling to demand troop mobilization, Pavkovic expressed the belief that “if [Milosevic] ordered out the tanks, the next picture he would see would be of protesters on top of the tanks giving a flower to a crying soldier.”<sup>275</sup>

As for the police, the number of police officers present in the capital was low on October 5<sup>th</sup>, especially considering the gravity of the crisis. According to reliable estimates, between 3,000 and 4,000 police officers were on duty in Belgrade, many guarding the Parliament and presidential building, RTS and Studio B television stations, and others scattered throughout other areas of the city.<sup>276</sup> Contributing to the low turnout was deliberate non-participation. A number of factors seem to account for this, but it is worth noting that during the days prior to October 5<sup>th</sup>, opposition leaders in each city had worked to convince local police of the futility of obedience given the opposition’s high likelihood of success. They urged contacts in the local police forces “to stay in the provinces, and not to come to Belgrade. There were all these messages. Don’t show up for work. Play sick, whatever. You’d better not get involved in this, because it’s the big one. You’d better not be on the wrong side of the fence.”<sup>277</sup> Ivan Vujacic, a DOS politician and former schoolmate of Djinjic, recalls. “In the small towns it works.”<sup>278</sup>

The ongoing standoff at Kolubara mines had also helped tactically to create localized weaknesses in ranks of police forces in the capital. By October 5<sup>th</sup>, as Serbian civilians were flooding into the capital, the ongoing standoff had continued to drain police resources. A significant number of officers from Belgrade, including the deputy interior minister General

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<sup>274</sup> Vlajkovic (2004) Part II. 84.

<sup>275</sup> Roger Cohen “From a Summons to a Slap: How the Fight in Yugoslavia Was Won” *The New York Times*, 10/14/00

<sup>276</sup> Bujosevic and Radovanovic (2003) 32; Radovan Milisavljevic, retired police officer, interview by author, Belgrade, 8/30/06

<sup>277</sup> Former Democratic Opposition of Serbia official. Personal Interview. January 21, 2008.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

Obrad Stevanovic, remained at the Kolubara mines until 2pm on the 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>279</sup> From the other sides of the police lines, Stevanovic recognized the strategic wisdom of the approach:

For the first time we faced a problem that was not just in Belgrade. That was perhaps the key strategy of the organizers of the demonstrations, to neutralize any serious measures that could be taken by police. For the first time it happened that on October the 5th we had the biggest number of demonstrators and the lowest number of police. And for the first time you had to have people at the same time in Kolubara, Krajevo, Vranje, and in Belgrade you need more than ever, but you don't have them at your disposal.<sup>280</sup>

Tying up police resources at Kolubara was an explicit strategic decision, according to DOS politicians. Covic, a major player in the events, said that he had paid particular attention to the mines because he realized that any standoff there would require a huge police force that would draw resources away from Belgrade.<sup>281</sup> Vuk Obradovic, when questioned later about why he sent only one busload of demonstrators from the Kolubara mines to Belgrade on the 5<sup>th</sup>, responded that “the key was to keep the police from consolidating their forces. We wanted to keep the police preoccupied in different places.”<sup>282</sup> Otpor strategist Srdja Popovic noted afterwards that the offensive launched on October 5th was intended to make police forces feel “like butter on bread, when it's spread too thin.”<sup>283</sup>

Scholars have argued that on October 5<sup>th</sup> and during the days immediately preceding, the perceived likelihood of challengers' success was the most significant factor influencing the willingness of new demonstrators to participate.<sup>284</sup> Analysis of Strategic Objective V indicates that the dynamic was also very much at play within the security forces, Otpor and DOS were

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<sup>279</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Nebojsa Covic. Personal interview. April 10, 2008.

<sup>282</sup> Cohen (2000)

<sup>283</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. May 15, 2008

<sup>284</sup> Paul D'Anieri, who emphasizes the role of “tipping points” in the Colored Revolutions, cites Thompson and Kuntz's observation that ‘Once the opposition had initiated the protests, the snowball effect kicked in. People showed greater readiness to take part in anti-regime protests because such activities now were considered much more likely to succeed’ D'Aneiri (2006) 341; cites Thomson and Kuntz (2004) 168.

able to convince a significant number of fence sitters that the opposition had acquired an aura of inevitability and that use of force against them would not only be difficult given opposition strength and dissention in the ranks, but would, also in the end, be futile.

### **Secondary Cases: March 1991 and December 1996-March 1997**

The following secondary cases reach back into recent Serbian history to augment understanding of the October 2000 case and to contrast opposition strategies and security fore loyalty shifts at earlier moments in the Serbian experience with the situation in the primary case study. In March 1991, none of the strategic objectives were achieved, and security forces seemed to be little affected. During the 1996-1997 demonstrations, some challengers addressed some of the strategic objectives, but ultimately, large-scale loyalty shifts did not take place.

#### **March 1991**

Decisions made by police, army and intelligence units to shift their loyalties away from the Milosevic regime in 2000 lie in stark contrast to what had happened nearly a decade before. On March 9, 1991, tanks from the first armored brigade occupied Belgrade following clashes between riot police and protestors. It was the first time tanks had been ordered onto the Belgrade streets against civilians since WWII.<sup>285</sup>

The protests of March 1991 were organized by the Serbian Renewal Party (SPO) and the Democratic Party. They initially called for the elimination over state control of national radio and television station RTS. On the morning of March 9<sup>th</sup>, more than 40,000 opposition

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<sup>285</sup> “Tanks leave centre of Yugoslav capital Citizens shocked, angered by army action” *The Globe and Mail* (Reuters) March 11, 1991

supporters defied a ban on demonstrations by congregating in Republica Square. Police forces complied with orders throughout the events, cracking down immediately on demonstrators with tear gas, rubber bullets and baton charges.<sup>286</sup> The swelling groups of protestors responded, violently attacking an armored vehicle and police cars and breaking into government offices and the Serbian parliament building.<sup>287</sup> As events escalated, police officers increasingly went above and beyond the call of duty to suppress what had turned into a riot. When police fired into crowds of young Serbs, an 18-year-old student was killed by a shot to the head and dozens more were wounded.<sup>288</sup>

Milosevic, declaring that the seeds of “chaos and violence” were being sown, called for a military response.<sup>289</sup> Because Yugoslavia’s federal system was still in place, the authority to send troops into the capital ultimately lay with the eight-member collective presidency and took place at the urging of its president Borisav Jovic, a loyal associate of Milosevic.<sup>290</sup> Milosevic remained at an army base in nearby Karadjordjevo throughout the duration of the crisis.<sup>291</sup>

Ultimately, columns of tanks and armored cars were sent into Belgrade city center, but marshal law was not established. Although army officers remained loyal to Milosevic, there was internal demarcation against the use of massive force against civilians. As would be the case in 2000, splits existed within the military elite about the appropriate line of action. One section of

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<sup>286</sup> Ian Traynor and Barney Petrovic “Tanks used against Serbian opposition: Milosevic's rival held during worst clashes since war” *The Guardian*, March 11, 1991

<sup>287</sup> *Tanjung*. March 9, 1991. Translated by World News Connection.

<sup>288</sup> Robert Thomas. *The Politics of Serbia in the 1990s*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. 81; David Binder, “Head of Yugoslavia's Government Resigns in Dispute on Army Role” *The New York Times*, March 16, 1991

<sup>289</sup> Lenard J. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom. The Rise and Fall of Slobodan Milosevic*. (Oxford and Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001) 68

<sup>290</sup> Thomas (1999) 82

<sup>291</sup> David Binder, “Head of Yugoslavia's Government Resigns in Dispute on Army Role” *The New York Times*, March 16, 1991.

the army general staff, lead by Chief of Staff Gen. Blagoje Adzic, assisted Milosevic by sending tanks into the streets of Belgrade, and also appeared to over-deliver, actively demanding that the army impose nationwide martial law.<sup>292</sup> The two top-ranking army generals, however, balked and martial law was not imposed.<sup>293</sup>

In evaluating whether challengers were able to influence security force loyalty, it is clear that the case can be considered a strategic failure for opposition groups. While there was some dissent in the ranks of the military over whether to establish marshal law, there were no widespread loyalty shifts in any security institution. As will be seen below, there also do not seem to have been any successful actions undertaken by challengers to address the five strategic objectives proposed in this paper as instrumental to success.

### ***Exposing Regime Illegitimacy***

Although regime legitimacy was at the core of the March 9<sup>th</sup> 1991 struggle, challengers were unable to significantly alter perceptions of the regime within the security forces. Milosevic and his party, the SPS, had swept the presidential and parliamentary elections of December 1990. His strongest opponent, Vuk Draskovic, organized demonstrations to protest the role that state-controlled media outlets had played in the SPS electoral victory. Demands escalated over the course of the protests as Draskovic and his followers, in the words of one report, “ended up by demanding the resignation of the entire Serbian government on grounds that retaining old Communist attitudes and policies alienates reform-minded republics and thus undermines national unity.”<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Blaine Harden, “Yugoslav Army Wavers on Civil Role; U.S. Ambassador Warns of Aid Cutoff if Military Intervenes” *Washington Post* March 15, 1991.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> Binder (1991).

Challenger actions did not shake perceptions Milosevic's legitimacy within the police and military forces was strong in 1991. With a clear majority in the elections, Milosevic was perceived as having a clear mandate to govern. He had won 65.3% of the popular vote in Serbia, with Draskovic as his closest opponent winning only 16.4%.<sup>295</sup> This fact resonated within the military: one officer later interviewed strongly emphasized that Serbia in 1991 was a "democratic regime."<sup>296</sup> Similarly, a senior police officer cast the competition as "on one side a socialist party with a stronghold on government, and *with a lot of support of voters*, and a charismatic leader of the opposition on the other side, who managed to motivate a lot of his followers."<sup>297</sup>

To emphasize its legitimacy during the protests and crackdown, the SPS organized counter-rallies, described by one state-run media source as "several score of protest rallies...held in several places in Serbia condemning the demonstrations of the opposition... and supporting the Serbian authorities."<sup>298</sup> Attendance for some of the counter-rallies reached 30,000, and included military pensioners and veterans among their ranks.<sup>299</sup> Numerous telegrams of support from the leaderships of a number of municipalities in Serbia were also sent to SPS leadership and publicized.<sup>300</sup>

Milosevic's ideology also resonated with the traditionally conservative military and police ranks, for whom socialist ideals remained an important part of their world view. Pledging that "with us there is no uncertainty," the SPS offered the promise of reform without the potential

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<sup>295</sup> Thomas (1999) 74.

<sup>296</sup> Colonel, Air Force, Republic of Serbia. Personal interview. April 2, 2008. One air force colonel ultimately sympathetic to the opposition in 2000 clearly differentiated October 5th from the events of March 1991 with the explanation that "the mold of the action was against dictatorship, not democratic regime."

<sup>297</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

<sup>298</sup> "Reactions to Belgrade Events" *Tanjug BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*. April 10, 1991.

<sup>299</sup> Thomas (1999) 83.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

upheaval that Vuk Draskovic and the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) might engender.<sup>301</sup> Army general Vuk Obradovic, who would later become the head of the opposition party “Social Democracy” publicly spoke out against the protestors, staunchly defending Milosevic’s vision of Yugoslavia.<sup>302</sup> One police officer, assessing the outcome, observed that police officers are “resolute because they feel a kind of threat to society...every police officer is by nature a conservative.”<sup>303</sup>

Although many officers in the lower and middle ranks of the army were “confused” by the decision to move tanks into the capital, and opposed the use of force against civilians, they felt that “they had to follow orders.”<sup>304</sup> Later explanations emphasize that they were “trying to calm the situation” and that it was “just a threat, not the use” of force.<sup>305</sup> The persistence of “communist values” within the army and the regime’s ability to exploit these values increased the levels of obedience. As one colonel recalls, within the army there was “still a strong sense of this communism – these types of values...the ideology of the communist army was to fight the enemies, whether external or internal.”<sup>306</sup> By successfully framing the issue as one of protection of the state and of communist values, Milosevic and the generals loyal to him were able to minimize dissent. Ultimately, according to one general, “[inside the army, [the order to mobilize] was without an issue.”<sup>307</sup>

### ***Demonstrating Opposition Legitimacy***

The case for police crackdown and military mobilization was further strengthened by the relatively low levels of legitimacy of the primary opposition figure, Vuk Draskovic, within the

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<sup>301</sup> Thomas (1999).

<sup>302</sup> Petar Lukovic “The March 9 Legacy” Balkans Crisis Report (IWPR) March 7, 2000.

<sup>303</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Republic of Serbia. Personal interview. April 8, 2008.

<sup>304</sup> General, Army, Republic of Serbia (ret.). Personal interview. April 3, 2008.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Colonel, Military Intelligence, Republic of Serbia. Personal Interview. February 20, 2008.

<sup>307</sup> General, Army, Republic of Serbia (ret.). Personal interview. April 3, 2008.

security forces. As a staunch anti-communist, Draskovic presented a direct threat to the ideologies still deeply entrenched in the police and military forces and there is no evidence that Draskovic tried to soften it.

State media helped to perpetuate this image. Dredging up memories of WWII, the press employed the language of the partisan myth to portray Draskovic and his followers as, in the words of one author, “rabid Chetniks intent on destroying the achievements of socialism.”<sup>308</sup> Although it corresponded to the increasingly prominent strands of Serb nationalism within Serbian society, the “Chetnik” image did not serve Draskovic well within the military. According to one retired general, the perception within the military was that “Vuk hated the army, believing that they were Communists...the red army.”<sup>309</sup> The dress of the opposition – which included traditional beards and hats reminiscent of the Chetnik style – did not help their cause.<sup>310</sup> As one Serbian author later remarked, “Milosevic’s success in attaching an aura of unreliability and suspicion to the SPO would henceforth mark its fortunes.”<sup>311</sup>

Within Serbia, Draskovic did not have the allies that would later strengthen the opposition’s legitimacy. Although Serbia Orthodox church’s patriarch, Pavle would play an active role in the student protests of 1996/1997 and again in 2000, in 1991 Pavle limited his actions to publicly imploring both sides to show restraint.<sup>312</sup> Pavle also directly challenged the opposition two years later, when he proclaimed that Draskovic’s hunger strike was an “unchristian act” and visited Draskovic three times to urge him to abandon the tactic.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> Thomas (1999) 82.

<sup>309</sup> General, Army, Republic of Serbia (ret.). Personal interview. April 3, 2008.

<sup>310</sup> Branislav Obradovic. Personal Interview. April 4, 2008.

<sup>311</sup> Zoran Kusovac “Serbia’s Inadequate Opposition” [www.mediaclub.cg.yu](http://www.mediaclub.cg.yu). Online at <http://www.mediaclub.cg.yu/eng/articles/2000/august/01.htm>

<sup>312</sup> Thomas (1999) 112.

<sup>313</sup> Milosevic: Portrait of a Tyrant, by Dusko Doder & Louise Branson. (New York: The Free Press, 1999.) 193.

The events were successfully portrayed as dangerous and unpatriotic. State news sources described the rallies as "destructive" and the SPO as having "betrayed the Serbian people," and studies noted afterwards that mentions of the events on broadcast news programs strongly focused on negative coverage of the opposition rather than the government (126 mentions of the opposition vs 87 of the government), of which all but six were negative.<sup>314</sup> The message resonated within the military. According to one colonel in military intelligence, many military officers viewed the protests as "American imperialist propaganda," labeling demonstrators as "traitors" to the Yugoslav ideal.<sup>315</sup> Gen. Branislav Obradovic, a former military officer and the brother of Vuk Obradovic, said that both he and his brother believed that the movement represented the "direct involvement of foreign forces in internal affairs of Yugoslavia," and were convinced that Western states – particularly the US and Germany – were responsible for the events. According to Obradovic, with this in mind, they "defended [Milosevic's] views, as a sign for foreign countries to stop getting involved and supporting Draskovic."<sup>316</sup>

At the barricades, relations between the police and demonstrators were largely negative. Civilians threw stones at police officers, calling them, 'Red bandits' and 'Fascists', as the lines of police began to attack protestors.<sup>317</sup> The negative results of this approach were noted by the opposition and, after a second round of violent demonstrations and police attacks two years later,

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<sup>314</sup> Cited by Christopher Tunnard "From State-Controlled Media to the 'Anarchy' of the Internet: the Changing Influence of Communications and Information in Serbia in the 1990s" *Journal of Southeast Europe and Black Sea Studies*, May, 2003 Volume 3, No. 2, pp. 97-17. Tunnard notes Matic's observation that March 9<sup>th</sup> broadcast news programs made "126 mentions of the opposition (120 negative, 6 positive) and 87 of the government (77 positive, 10 negative.)" (Material in quotes from Tunnard) Matic, Jovanka. "The Role of the Media: Media Portraits of Government and Opposition." In Elections to the Federal and Republican Parliaments, ed. Vladimir Goati, 109-24 (Berlin: Edition Sigma, 1998) 113.

<sup>315</sup> Colonel, Military Intelligence, Republic of Serbia. Personal Interview. March 13, 2008.

<sup>316</sup> Branislav Obradovic. Personal Interview. April 4, 2008.

<sup>317</sup> "Tanks used against Serbian opposition: Milosevic's rival held during worst clashes since war" *The Guardian* March 11, 1991.

opposition leaders began to “realize the mistakes. And they stopped tensions between opposition and police.”<sup>318</sup>

In 1991, there were no attempts at such communication to influence perceptions of opposition legitimacy within the police and military forces. In fact, there were few contacts between opposition groups and security forces at all. As one SDB officer later recalled, in the early 1990s “Vuk Draskovic avoided those kinds of contacts because he was more exclusive – he didn’t have that pragmatic side. Maybe he was too emotional.”<sup>319</sup> Communications between the opposition and police forces were therefore exclusively public, and confrontational. Before March 9<sup>th</sup>, the Belgrade police had publicly urged the SPO not to hold the rally in Terazije, viewed as "a heavy violation of public law and order."<sup>320</sup> The SPO responded by publicly announcing that it would be holding the demonstrations in the face of these warnings.<sup>321</sup> Paired with the negative refrains hurled by demonstrators, these statements did little to improve perceptions of the opposition held by those in uniform.

### ***Mitigating the Costs of Accommodation***

Police officers in Belgrade on March 9, 1991 also argue that they believed there was a significant likelihood of violence and chaos if they did not act. While this is not an uncommon defense for repression, various accounts of the events – and the death of a 54-year old policeman at the hands of demonstrators – support the argument that the perceived costs of allowing demonstrators to continue might have been a factor in the severity of the response.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Popovic, Srdja. Personal interview. August 24, 2008

<sup>319</sup> Senior official, SDB (former). Personal interview. April 7, 2008.

<sup>320</sup> Tanjug March 10, 1991.

<sup>321</sup> Tanjug March 9, 1991.

<sup>322</sup> Thomas (1999) 81

General Stevanovic, a Belgrade officer at the time, recalls that based on their predictions of violence on the opposition's strategy and character, "we had the assessment that clashes would occur. We had profiles of the leaders of demonstrations. It was obvious that they would be consistent in their intentions."<sup>323</sup> With this assessment, the conflict was framed by both the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense as a threat to national stability. Stevanovic recalls believing that "we were on the verge of civil conflict" and that the demonstrations were perceived by police forces as a "strategic problem, which endangered the current structure and current government."<sup>324</sup> Milosevic himself framed the issues in apocalyptic terms when he announced that "today in Serbia and Belgrade that which is of greatest value for our land and nation came under attack, peace was threatened... the state organs of the republic will use all their constitutional authority to ensure that chaos and violence are not permitted to spread in Serbia."<sup>325</sup> Senior officers and government leaders thus reinforced a pervasive belief within the security institutions that disastrous consequences might result if the crowds were permitted to continue their activities unchecked. Prior to the event, leaders seem to have made no effort to allay security concerns. In fact, it appears that Draskovic had made inflammatory comments suggesting, in the words of one political rival, that the opposition might "hang people,"<sup>326</sup>

Police officers felt unprepared to manage the protestors. Independent media sources reported the pervasiveness of this sentiment. As one writer summarized it: "Nervous and unprepared for events of this kind, the police responded with a show of force: thousands of officers took to the streets backed by hundreds of armored vehicles and dozens of special

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<sup>323</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> Woodward (1995) 82

<sup>326</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

vehicles.”<sup>327</sup> General Stevanovic recalled, “We can say that we were not ready and realized that we were part of an institution that could not offer an acceptable amount of security in town.”<sup>328</sup>

Noting the level of tension within the police during the event, he observed that “as the number of demonstrators grew and the level of violence grew, the ministry was boosting up the forces that were drawn into Belgrade, which were not equipped enough, not prepared enough for this situation.”<sup>329</sup> The feeling of lack of preparedness meant that the Interior Ministry stood to lose face if chaos mounted.

Frequent state media reports of escalating clashes between police and demonstrators added to the atmosphere of crisis. *Tanjug*, a state-run newspaper outlet and wire service, offered near-hourly updates, focusing primarily on civilian-led violence. At 11am *Tanjug* reported that “In the face of the surge of demonstrators the police were forced to withdraw from Republic Square at exactly midday. The demonstrators attacked an armored vehicle and put up an SPO flag on one of them...security forces retreated along Francuska Street.”<sup>330</sup> Two hours later, *Tanjug* reported that “in front of the National Theatre building the demonstrators vandalised several trolleybuses and overturned two police cars.”<sup>331</sup> Similar reports continued throughout the afternoon and the evening, announcing, for example that “demonstrators had set off for the Serbian government building, and then for the railway station destroying everything in their path.”<sup>332</sup>

Although the most relevant costs appear to have been short-term concerns about civil conflict, it might also be noted that no attempts were made to mitigate the longer-term costs to

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<sup>327</sup> Petar Lukovic “The March 9 Legacy” (BCR No. 122, 7-Mar-00)

<sup>328</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

Former Democratic Opposition of Serbia official. Personal Interview. January 21, 2008.

<sup>329</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

<sup>330</sup> *Tanjug*, 3/9/91 Retrieved via World News Connection

<sup>331</sup> *Tanjug*, 3/9/91 Translation by Yugoslav News Agency . Retreived via World News Connection

<sup>332</sup> They also reported that “the buildings of the Federal Secretariat for National Defence and the General HQ in Prince Milos Street had their security particularly strengthened. Late that evening some demonstrators threw stones at these buildings (*Tanjug*, 3/9/91)

security forces of an opposition victory. This issue was highlighted by an article in the *The Washington Post*, which noted the privileges enjoyed by senior military officers and observed that worsening economic conditions and the “burgeoning democratic movement in Serbia” were “likely to spell an end to many of those benefits.”<sup>333</sup>

### ***Increasing Costs of Repression***

Media coverage of demonstrator violence undermined much of the “backfire” that might have occurred in response to repression. International correspondents covering army responses reported that the violence “prompted the Yugoslav presidency to send in tanks and troops to try to restore order and protect important buildings.”<sup>334</sup> Another news source reported that some foreign diplomats “felt the situation was so chaotic a ‘Tiananmen Square,’ could not be discounted.”<sup>335</sup> The *New York Times* noted the violent clashes between protestors and police units, and explained that the army had sent “armored columns into the streets as a calming ‘presence.’”<sup>336</sup> Within the restricted media environment of Serbia, state-run television permeated the airwaves with programs offering “unreserved support” for the crackdown.<sup>337</sup>

Officials also justified the crackdown through a security framework. Belgrade's Mayor Milorad Unkovic, who emphasized that “it is natural that the army should be deployed when the security of the capital city is threatened.”<sup>338</sup> Noting the violence of the protestors, Unkovic

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<sup>333</sup> Blaine Harden, “Yugoslav Army Wavers on Civil Role; U.S. Ambassador Warns of Aid Cutoff if Military Intervenes” *Washington Post*, March 14, 1991.

<sup>334</sup> (Italics added) Graham Barrett, “Tuesday Parliament in crisis session after Serbs fight police” *The Age* March 12, 1991.

<sup>335</sup> “Yugoslav army on high alert” *The Toronto Star* March 13, 1991

<sup>336</sup> David Binder, “Head of Yugoslavia's Government Resigns in Dispute on Army Role” *The New York Times*, March 16, 1991.

<sup>337</sup> Marcus Tanner “Riot police control Belgrade” *The Independent* (London), March 11, 1991. Retrieved via Lexis Nexis.

<sup>338</sup> “Other Belgrade Unrest Reports in Brief” (Mayor of Belgrade gives press conference) BBC Summary of World Broadcasts; March 12, 1991.

argued that “without the effective action of the state, the number of casualties would have been much higher.”<sup>339</sup> Themes of national unity resonated with members of the military, as SPS organized nationwide rallies described by one correspondent as “in support of the army as the defender of Yugoslav unity and against what they called the fascist opposition.”<sup>340</sup> In the absence of private channels of communication with sources outside their institution, police officers accepted the information channeled through official sources “because we were in touch with the government and we were against the protestors... because of police duties and our competencies.”<sup>341</sup>

Recognition that civilian-led violence strengthened Milosevic’s ability to engage in repression would later inform decisions made by activists in 1996/1997 and 2000. Recalling Otpor’s strategic decision to remain nonviolent, Srdja Popovic, a leader of the group observed that the chaos in the streets in 1991 offered the Milosevic regime the “only way to use [the military] legally. There was violence in the streets, which was considered to be an invitation for violent destruction of constitutional law and order. It’s the only way you can use the army in this country.”<sup>342</sup>

There were some repercussions of the crackdown. After Vuk Draskovic was arrested on March 10<sup>th</sup>, student protestors continued to swarm the streets, demanding his release. Some reports place the crowds as reaching several hundreds of thousands.<sup>343</sup> Ultimately, the regime agreed to demands that prisoners be freed. Challengers did not succeed in linking the costs of repression to those who initiated and implemented it. In his discussion of the events after the fact, Draskovic placed primary responsibility for the bloodshed on Slobodan Milosevic and

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<sup>339</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>340</sup> Graham Barrett, “Tuesday Parliament in crisis session after Serbs fight police” *The Age*. March 12, 1991.

<sup>341</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview. April 8, 2008.

<sup>342</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal Interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>343</sup> Thompson (1999) 82.

announced that Milosevic was the “only person who could save the situation.”<sup>344</sup> Individuals in the Interior Ministry experienced few costs as a result of the repressive activity. Although protestors called for the dismissal of the Interior Minister, they later conceded to a government promise to set up a commission to investigate the weekend violence.<sup>345</sup> In fact, the event, as well as later protests in 1993, spurred the regime to invest more heavily in the Interior Ministry to bolster its capacity to quell disruptions. Similarly, within the army, there were no formal repercussions, although some individuals within the service reported feeling dissatisfied with their role in Belgrade and the legacy it left for the military.<sup>346</sup>

### ***Demonstrating Likelihood of Success***

The security forces in 1991 did not expect the demonstrations to lead to the assumption of power by the opposition. Although Draskovic eventually called for Milosevic’s ouster, severe splits within the opposition parties and their relatively narrow support base made such an event highly unlikely. The relatively unified front of security forces reinforced this perception.

Internal divisions within the opposition camp made it difficult to imagine a viable alternative to Milosevic. During the events, Draskovic remained the primary figure, and while there was a temporary coalition –the Serbian National Council – created after the events that, in the words of one analyst, “attempted to offer a unifying framework for opposition leaders from the political, ecclesiastical, and intellectual realms, it soon disintegrated amidst bitter disputes.”<sup>347</sup> Vojislav Seselj, a radical opposition figure who had briefly allied with Draskovic in 1989, bitterly commented during the event that Milosevic “made a mistake by arresting Vuk Draskovic, whom

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<sup>344</sup> *Tanjug*, March 9, 1991.

<sup>345</sup> Stephen Engelberg “Serbians Give in to 3-Day Protest” *The New York Times* March 13, 1991.

<sup>346</sup> General, Army, Republic of Serbia (ret.). Personal interview. April 3, 2008.

<sup>347</sup> Thomas (1999) 87-89. Draskovic’s wife, Danica, is said to have smashed a wine bottle over the head of a political opponent during one particularly contentious discussion.

they should have left to face the wrath of the Serbian people.”<sup>348</sup> One military colonel in the service in 1991 recalls that “on the other side, the opposition leaders were not unified. It was their bad omen.”<sup>349</sup>

Although crowds ultimately grew in size after the arrest of Draskovic, the initial scope of participation in the Belgrade demonstrations was limited – most reports place the number of civilians in the streets on March 9th at between 30,000 and 40,000<sup>350</sup> Later reports indicated that during the following days, as many as 500,000 protestors ultimately arrived in the main streets.<sup>351</sup> Based in Belgrade, the demonstrations were composed primarily of university students.<sup>352</sup> When asked whether they believed that Draskovic and his followers might be successful in significantly challenging Milosevic, police officers interviewed later responded in the negative.<sup>353</sup>

### **December 1996- March 1997**

During the 1996/1997 demonstrations, while significant potential existed for loyalty shifts, challengers were unable to capitalize it. Interestingly for this study, neither did they fully achieve any of the five strategic objectives formulated in Chapter 1. The popular uprising of 1996/1997 began in response to Milosevic’s attempt to annul the November 17<sup>th</sup> municipal elections, which had yielded significant opposition victories for local offices in all major Serbian cities.<sup>354</sup> Organized by the shaky opposition coalition *Zajedno* and by students from the University of Belgrade and other regional schools, the protests lasted for over three months, despite intermittent

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<sup>348</sup> *Tanjug*, March 12, 1991.

<sup>349</sup> Colonel, Military Intelligence, Republic of Serbia. Personal Interview. March 13, 2008.

<sup>350</sup> “Tanks leave centre of Yugoslav capital Citizens shocked, angered by army action” *The Globe and Mail* (Reuters) March 11, 1991.

<sup>351</sup> Thomas (1999) 82

<sup>352</sup> “Belgrade clashes force talks on reform” *The Toronto Star*, March 11, 1991.

<sup>353</sup> Obrad Stevanovic. Personal interview, April 8, 2008.

<sup>354</sup> Andrej Milivojevic “Book Review: Still Standing: Two accounts of regime stability in Serbia” *Central Europe Review* 10/2/00. [http://www.ce-review.org/00/33/books33\\_milivojevic.html](http://www.ce-review.org/00/33/books33_milivojevic.html)

non-lethal crackdowns by the police forces. Ultimately, Milosevic conceded the opposition's local political victories. But his central control of the state, the ultimate target of the challengers, would remain until 2000.

Responses within the security forces throughout the events were mixed. The security service (SDB) under Jovica Stanisic remained very loyal to the regime, penetrating opposition organizations and working to exploit cracks in the coalition to exacerbate disunity.<sup>355</sup> The police used violent force on numerous occasions, and on one occasion left some 200 protestors hospitalized. Police behavior during the 96/97 protests has been divided into three increasingly violent phases by human rights analysts reporting on the events.<sup>356</sup>

The first, which lasted until a late December counter-rally organized by SPS and Milosevic authorities, was "characterized by individual arrests and appearances before magistrates."<sup>357</sup> Police did not attempt to stop demonstrations during this time.

The "second phase," defined by a protests in Belgrade, lasted until February 2<sup>nd</sup>. During this time, police presence increased. On December 24<sup>th</sup>, demonstrators were savagely beaten as police in riot gear dispersed the pro-opposition crowd.<sup>358</sup> One protestor was reportedly shot in the head and another died of injuries after being beaten – no assailants were identified in either case, but student leaders suspected police involvement.<sup>359</sup> In early January, Serbian Internal Affairs Minister Zoran Sokolovic granted the students a meeting at the Interior Ministry. Student leaders called on Sokolovic to withdraw special police units from central Belgrade, insisting on their right to protest by walking in pedestrian zones without disrupting traffic.<sup>360</sup> Sokolovic denied

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<sup>355</sup> Senior official, SDB (former). Personal interview. April 7, 2008.

<sup>356</sup> *Spotlight on Political Uses of Police Violence* (Belgrade: Humanitarian Law Center, 1997) 7.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid. 9.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

<sup>359</sup> *Spotlight on Political Uses of Police Violence* (Belgrade: Humanitarian Law Center, 1997) 8.

<sup>360</sup> Dejan Anastastijevic "The Students Between the Army and Police Two Colors: Blue and Green" *Vreme* January 11, 1997.

knowledge of violent activities by plain-clothes officers, reiterating regime statements about the illegality of the protests.<sup>361</sup> Assistant minister of police General Radovan Stojcic Badza and state security chief Jovica Stanisic - who were closely involved with public police and state security activities during the protests - notably did not attend the meeting.<sup>362</sup>

Finally, the “third phase” of police behavior was marked by violent police attacks against protestors on the night between February 2<sup>nd</sup> and February 3<sup>rd</sup>. According to one report, over 200 demonstrators were hospitalized after the February 2<sup>nd</sup> police attacks, which included use of water cannon and brutal beatings.<sup>363</sup>

Over the course of the demonstrations, limited loyalty shifts occurred. There were anecdotal reports of local Belgrade forces demarcating their unwillingness to use lethal force: one independent media outlet reported that in response to questions about whether he and his colleagues would use violence against the nonviolent protesters if ordered to, the policeman replied, "I wouldn't be too sure about that."<sup>364</sup> Some limited renouncing also appears to have occurred as the opposition attempted to highlight potential cleavages in the ranks. The independent newspaper, *Nasa Borba*, reportedly printed a letter of support from 65 police to protesters in the city of Kraljevo, reassuring their fellow citizens that they would not act against them and would protect them from police from other towns.<sup>365</sup> Vuk Draskovic also revealed a letter purportedly from the 63<sup>rd</sup> VJ airborne unit stating its support for the opposition. However,

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<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> “I Sing the Body Electric: lessons from the 1996/1997 protests in Belgrade. *Lebenstraum* blog, 25 October 2008. Online at: <http://rastkonovakovic.wordpress.com/2008/10/25/i-sing-the-body-electric-lessons-from-the-19961997-protests-in-belgrade/>.

<sup>364</sup> “Protests in Belgrade and the Rest of Former Yugoslavia, Part I.” Balkan Peace Team - Belgrade Special Report: December 7, 1996). Online at [www.peacebrigades.org/archive/bpt/bpt96-14.html](http://www.peacebrigades.org/archive/bpt/bpt96-14.html).

<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

people within the military recognized that this only represented a few individuals from within the unit, and was thus not a representative statement.<sup>366</sup>

One key example of demarcation did occur. Within the military, statements by VJ chief of staff General Momcilo Perisic indicated that high-ranking military officials were unwilling to use troops against protestors. General Perisic met with Serbian students in early January. During the course of the meeting, Perisic indicated that he would not allow troops to be used against the students.<sup>367</sup> General Perisic recalls that he received a great deal of support from his colleagues in the Ministry of Defense for his position.<sup>368</sup> The attendance of the commanders of air force and ground force commanders and the heads of the VJ information and security departments at the meeting confirmed this support.<sup>369</sup> *Vreme* reporter Dejan Anastasijevic observed at the time that a “precedent was set in the student meeting with the VJ chiefs” as it marked the first moment that the VJ had “officially and directly communicated with a political organization outside the regime, especially an organization that is against the regime.”<sup>370</sup>

While the choices and behaviors of security forces during 1996-1997 signify some successes, it should also be recalled that the large majority of police forces complied with orders to beat and fire water cannons onto protestors, and that no credible and large-scale defections occurred during the course of the demonstrations. Outcomes can best be described as mixed. Likewise, the five strategic objectives posited in this paper were inconsistently fulfilled by challengers. As with 1991, the following section examines challenger efforts and performance along the five strategic objectives. Some objectives were partially met, a few not at all.

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<sup>366</sup> General, Army, Republic of Serbia (ret.). Personal interview. April 3, 2008.

<sup>367</sup> Although it was never publicized at the time, General Perisic later recalled telling the students that “not only would I not use the army against protestors, but if someone tried to go against them, I would use the army to arrest that person.” General Momcilo Perisic. Interview. Belgrade, April 9, 2008.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> Dejan Anastastijevic “The Students Between the Army and Police Two Colors: Blue and Green” *Vreme* January 11, 1997

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

## ***Exposing Regime Illegitimacy***

Although convictions appear to have played little role in decisions made by the majority of police officers during the 1996/1997 protests, it was different in the army. Milosevic's lack of regime legitimacy seems to have influenced decisions made within the VJ to remain neutral. Milosevic had lost credibility within the military since 1991. By 1997, according to some sources, at least 50% of the army (VJ) held anti-regime attitudes and supported radical military reforms, although "commanders of military regions, generals, and various services dependent on commands were generally still loyal to the regime."<sup>371</sup> This was large part due to the wartime strains, as well as Milosevic's transfer of resources from the military to the Interior Ministry. VJ officers recall that by 1996, due to the Balkan wars and the resulting refugee crisis, "the whole concept of how [Milosevic] wanted to run the country was destroyed."<sup>372</sup>

Despite their waning legitimacy, however, political figures associated with the regime "wanted to use [VJ] officers to gain as much power as they could." Officers recall that during the protests, they were expected "to say to all the soldiers that the opposition parties were lead by people who were foreign spies, who were against the country and against the regime. Trying to play the patriotic game. And 'patriotic' is only those people in power - those who aren't are 'run by foreigners.'"<sup>373</sup>

In an apparent attempt to shore up their perceived legitimacy, the SPS announced plans for a large counter demonstration in Belgrade on December 24th, publicly predicting up to one million

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<sup>371</sup> GlobalSecurity.org writes that: "as of 1997, according to one estimate, at least a half of the Army had anti-regime attitudes and supported radical reforms and a quick professionalization of the Army. They included special forces, the whole air force, military institutes, and many officers. Commanders of military regions, generals, and various services dependent on commands were generally still loyal to the regime." "Serbia: Ministry of Defense" GlobalSecurity.org, copyright 2000-2009, modified 4/27/05. Online at: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world-serbia/mod.htm>.

<sup>372</sup> Captain, Serbian army (former). Personal interview. August 23, 2006.

<sup>373</sup> General Momcilo Perisic. Interview. Belgrade, April 9, 2008.

participants.<sup>374</sup> Perisic articulated the military's recognition that the counter-protests were a staged event, recalling that "since [SPS] didn't have enough support in Belgrade, they brought in people from all over Serbia."<sup>375</sup> Any perceived legitimacy conveyed by the counter-protest was likely mitigated by media reports that workers had been hustled onto buses from factory night shifts and instructed to carry SPS banners, without prior knowledge of the daily protest marches against Milosevic.<sup>376</sup> Milosevic officials, according to General Perisic, "had tried to talk to the army about giving transportation for the people who would come."<sup>377</sup> While Perisic had declined to offer military transportation, some lower ranking officers complied with the SPS and provided military buses. The ultimate count was about 40,000, consisting primarily of farmers and rural workers – traditional members of the Milosevic base.<sup>378</sup>

Although communications between military officers and political opposition leaders were 'spontaneous' and limited during the protests, when it did occur, common frustration with the regime provided a starting point for those who were willing to meet. Opposition politician Zoran Zivkovic, who had won the Nis mayoral elections that Milosevic was trying to annul, later noted that it was "clear that most military representatives shared our opinions...the consequence of very low living standards and the feeling that they had been manipulated by Milosevic for his interests."<sup>379</sup> During his meeting with student representatives, Perisic and the students discussed the illegality of using the army against civilians, and spoke positively about democracy and respect for the constitution.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> "Protests in Belgrade and the Rest of Former Yugoslavia, Part I." Balkan Peace Team - Belgrade Special Report: December 7, 1996). Online at [www.peacebrigades.org/archive/bpt/bpt96-14.html](http://www.peacebrigades.org/archive/bpt/bpt96-14.html)

<sup>375</sup> General Momcilo Perisic. Personal interview. April 9, 2008.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid.

<sup>378</sup> "Protests in Belgrade and the Rest of Former Yugoslavia, Part I." Balkan Peace Team - Belgrade Special Report: December 7, 1996).

<sup>379</sup> Zoran Zivkovic. Email correspondence. April 30, 2008.

<sup>380</sup> General Momcilo Perisic. Personal interview. April 9, 2008.

Generally within the Interior Ministry, it appears that calculations of legitimacy were less relevant. One air force colonel who had spoken with police officers at a training camp near Belgrade recalls asking the officers whether they'd be willing to be used by the regime against civilian demonstrators. The uniform response, he recalls, was “I am a professional, I work for my salary. If I have money enough for me, it's okay.”<sup>381</sup> A police captain who had served the Milosevic regime throughout the 1990s and was deployed on October 5<sup>th</sup> corroborated the sentiment, later reporting that friends and family was asking him when he would “turn my back on Milosevic,” and he would reply that he would do so “as soon as I see 500,000 demonstrators in the middle of Belgrade... I was fully aware that [previous] elections had been stolen. I was waiting for the moment when 500,000 people got on streets.”<sup>382</sup> Until then, he felt, his personal assessment of relative legitimacy mattered little. For these officers, it was easier to stick with the position reiterated by their superiors, which was that all police officers were “acting in accordance with the law.”<sup>383</sup>

### **Establishing Challenger Legitimacy**

Some, but not all, challengers in 96/97 were able to establish legitimacy in the eyes of the security forces. While the predominantly nonviolent tactics employed by the students increased their legitimacy in the eyes of military leaders, deep skepticism about the political opposition undermined the legitimacy of the demonstrations as a whole.

General Perisic appears to have been impressed by the tactics and objectives of the student leaders. Ceda Jovanovic later recalled that during his meeting with Perisic, the chief of staff and

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<sup>381</sup> Colonel, Air Force, Republic of Serbia. Personal interview. April 2, 2008.

<sup>382</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic. Police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia.. Personal interview, August 20, 2006.

<sup>383</sup> Dejan Anastastijevic “The Students Between the Army and Police Two Colors: Blue and Green” *Vreme* January 11, 1997.

officers “asked us what we intend to do and why we’re marching and we explained that the walks have raised morale and preserved the energy of the student protest and that it was like when an officer commands his troops to get out of their trucks at sub-zero temperatures and march,” to which the general responded favorably.<sup>384</sup> Notably, the press release of the military later commented on the nonviolent nature of the protests, offering, as one commentator observed, “an indirect condemnation of the police blockade of their daily protest walks.”<sup>385</sup> Students also later recalled that “Perisic said we’re on the same side. Both of us want the constitution respected.”<sup>386</sup>

While many interactions between protestors and police officers during the 96/97 student protests were cordial, negative interactions were often correlated with repression. According to media sources reporting at the times, violent beatings particularly occurred “when police feel they are being taunted.”<sup>387</sup> In other cases, it simply seemed as though police officers were displacing frustrations onto the demonstrators: in one account recorded shortly after the events, a demonstrator who was beaten recalled officers shouting: “kill him... it’s because of you that we have to be here.”<sup>388</sup> Conversely, there were a few reports of police officers quietly subverted by collaborating with the student demonstrators when positive relationships were established. One activist involved in the student protests recalls, for example, that “some local police were actually telling demonstrators where and when special forces would intervene. So they were warning us – if you go there, they will beat you. If you go there, they will not beat you.”<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> Dejan Anastastijevic “The Students Between the Army and Police Two Colors: Blue and Green” *Vreme* January 11, 1997.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>386</sup> Dejan Anastastijevic “The Students Between the Army and Police Two Colors: Blue and Green” *Vreme* January 11, 1997.

<sup>387</sup> “Protests in Belgrade and the Rest of Former Yugoslavia, Part I.” Balkan Peace Team - Belgrade Special Report: December 7, 1996).

<sup>388</sup> *Spotlight on Political Uses of Police Violence* (Belgrade: Humanitarian Law Center, 1997) 72.

<sup>389</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

Regime officials also attempted to use instances of chaos to undermine the demonstrators and initiate repression. On December 1<sup>st</sup>, after protestors threw eggs at public buildings, the president of the Federal Parliament called demonstrators “fascists” on state television and warned that police would no longer tolerate these demonstrations for reasons of security to both traffic and buildings.<sup>390</sup> Independent media sources were under particular pressure to discredit the protests. During the first month of the campaign, the *Daily Blic* had offered close coverage of the demonstrations with its readership concurrently soaring from 30,000 to 200,000. However, many *Blic* reporters ultimately quit their positions after Austrian owner Peter Koelbl – reportedly under pressure from the regime – wrote a public letter stating that the demonstrators were ‘not respecting democracy.’<sup>391</sup>

Unlike the protestors of 1991, students and opposition leaders marching in the winter of 96/97 had an important ally on their side. The church, whose nationalist stance held symbolic value for the traditionally conservative members of the military and police, publicly unified around the student movement after a major meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of January.<sup>392</sup> In the wake of the violent suppression of protestors during the night of January 2<sup>nd</sup>, involvement of church leaders in a Serbian Christmas march and service soon afterwards had an immediate effect on police, who did not engage in repressive activities during that time.<sup>393</sup> The Serbian Orthodox Patriarch also visited the students in late January, after a weeklong police cordon had prevented students from participating in their daily protest walks. Srdja Popovic recalls that during this visit “students convinced

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<sup>390</sup> “Protests in Belgrade and the Rest of Former Yugoslavia, Part I.” Balkan Peace Team - Belgrade Special Report: December 7, 1996).

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid.

<sup>393</sup> Vladimir Vuletic “Citizens in Protest” in Mladen Lazic (ed.) *Protest in Belgrade. Winter of Discontent*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999) 98, Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

the patriarch to walk with them directly toward the police cordon. This is the day they withdrew.”<sup>394</sup>

While the support of the church offered important “certification” for the movement, support for the movement was not representative of Serbia’s broader population. Only 2% of those protesting were industrial workers, and only 4% were manual workers in services sector.<sup>395</sup> The demonstrations were primarily composed of students and professional classes – an urban strata traditionally associated with dissent against the regime.<sup>396</sup> These protestors stood in dramatic contrast to the rural workers and farmers brought in by bus for the pro-SPS “counter-protests.”

There was widespread ambivalence about the political opposition coalition, *Zajedno*, even from within the crowds of demonstrators. An important distinction was drawn during the protests between the political opposition and the students. Although the protests were initiated in order to support the opposition’s right to hold local offices, the coalition was seen by some Belgrade activists as “quite dubious and unreliable, and with nationalistic tendencies in each of the member party leaders, either for real or out of temporary strategic reasons,” and some activists chose to stay away from something they saw as a “walking *Zajedno*-rally.”<sup>397</sup> Feminist activists also lamented that the protests were characterized by “nationalist male chauvinists.”<sup>398</sup>

The effect of the split on security force perceptions became clear after student leaders met with members of the MoD General Staff. During the meeting General Perisic

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<sup>394</sup> Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>395</sup> Vladimir Ilic “Social and Political Consciousness of Protest Participants” in Mladen Lazic (ed.) *Protest in Belgrade. Winter of Discontent* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999) 101.

<sup>396</sup> Maija Babovic “Potential for an Active Society” in Mladen Lazic (ed.) *Protest in Belgrade. Winter of Discontent* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999) 41-42.

<sup>397</sup> “Protests in Belgrade and the Rest of Former Yugoslavia, Part I.” Balkan Peace Team - Belgrade Special Report: December 7, 1996).

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

recalls announcing that “in young people, I see the defenders of the country and democracy in the country.”<sup>399</sup> One of the student leaders later recalled that Perisic remarked that students, like the army, were “above politics.”<sup>400</sup> The implicit implication that the political opposition at that time was unsavory, however, undermined the military’s normative support for the movement as a whole.

### ***Raising the Costs of Repression***

The deterrent effects of the costs of repression during the 1996/1997 protests in Belgrade were determined largely by the number of protestors within a given crowd, the tactics employed by protestors and their sympathizers to expose individuals engaging in violence, and pressure by police officers’ communities in response to crackdowns. As it had in previous protests, the regime attempted to reduce the costs of repression by framing an aggressive police stance as a response to chaos in the streets.

Numbers appear to have played a significant role in determining which groups of protestors were beaten. During the larger rallies of 100,000 demonstrators or more, police would remain largely passive.<sup>401</sup> When numbers began to dwindle, police turned up in strength, taking a more aggressive stance. Tactics dispersing crowds into smaller groups throughout Belgrade were useful in that the police were “unable to block all these small marches,” but increased the vulnerability of the individuals involved, as “when some of these small marches have met up with the police, protesters have been beaten.”<sup>402</sup> Recognizing the importance of numbers, even NGOs who had avoided the

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<sup>399</sup> General Momcilo Perisic. Interview. Belgrade, April 9, 2008.

<sup>400</sup> Ceda Jovanovic. Personal interview. August 25, 2006.

<sup>401</sup> Thompson and Kuntz (2004) 164

<sup>402</sup> “Protests in Belgrade and the Rest of Former Yugoslavia, Part I.” Balkan Peace Team - Belgrade Special Report: December 7, 1996).

*Zajedno* protests on principle were motivated to attend occasions when it was deemed “important to stand up to the police threats.”<sup>403</sup>

Tactics by allies that held local police responsible for their repressive acts were also useful in escalating costs. One sympathetic officer recalls that during the protests, he and his colleagues looked through police files to “crash police activity. We gave journalists the names of police who beat the citizens, with pictures and names, address where he is living.... If you beat someone, and the next day see your name in the paper, probably the next day you will not do the same thing. And it sends a message to other police.”<sup>404</sup> Media outlets also photographed police using clubs on demonstrators, and published the photos – and the names of the officers involved - in the independent media sources.<sup>405</sup> As a result of community pressures, many Belgrade-based police became increasingly reluctant to act against protestors.

In response to this reluctance, the Interior Ministry brought in units from outside Belgrade, who proved more willing to crack down. However, the costs of repression were still felt within the Belgrade police. As one activist recalls, “Belgrade police were pissed off because they were paying the price in popularity for things that the other police were doing.”<sup>406</sup> The “backfire” dynamic was in full play as the costs of repression increasingly prompted police officers to defect by alerting protestors to dangers.<sup>407</sup>

Attempts to create pretexts for repression also appear to have occurred. The regime was charged by religious and diplomatic leaders of attempting to lower the costs of

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<sup>403</sup> Ibid.

<sup>404</sup> Colonel Vulevic Spasoje. Personal interview, May 12, 2008.

<sup>405</sup> “Protests in Belgrade and the Rest of Former Yugoslavia, Part I.” Balkan Peace Team - Belgrade Special Report: December 7, 1996)

<sup>406</sup> Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid.

repression by orchestrating clashes – Serbian opposition leaders claimed that "egg-throwing" was instigated by the regime's provocateurs who were authorized "to write prescribed graffiti on facades, to distribute preprinted leaflets with content concocted by the police, to spread rumors, and to incite violence."<sup>408</sup> The SPS counter-demonstration, scheduled to take place at the same time and place as the opposition's daily protest march, predictably erupted in chaos as the two groups began clashing.<sup>409</sup> Twenty thousand members of the police were present, creating a cordon between the SPS contingent and 300,000 demonstrators. Observers reported fights between groups of demonstrators, two people injured by gunshots and numerous instances of beatings by police forces.<sup>410</sup>

Often embedded in opposition protests, SDB agents engaged in what one author calls "programmed provocations" known such as battering official buildings with eggs," and acting as agents provocateurs prior to police repression.<sup>411</sup> Tear gas was similarly thrown out of the opposition crowds during rallies – usually, in the words of one observer "by someone from the regime to smear the opposition."<sup>412</sup> RTS television, which always vastly underestimated the numbers of people present, would then report the event as 'a gathering of mindless hooligans intent on destroying Serbia" and frame police action within that context.<sup>413</sup>

Responses by the regime were swift and forceful. Following the counter demonstration, the regime officially banned street protests in the capital and dispatched riot police units throughout the streets. Regime officials also attempted to use the clashes

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<sup>408</sup> "Secret Police Keeps Milosevic in Power" *Vjesnik* 12/1/96 World News Connection

<sup>409</sup> "Protests in Belgrade and the Rest of Former Yugoslavia, Part I." Balkan Peace Team - Belgrade Special Report: December 7, 1996).

<sup>410</sup> Ibid.

<sup>411</sup> "Serbia: State Security Service, Sluzba drzavne bezbednosti [SDB]" GlobalSecurity.org.

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/serbia/sdb.htm>. Accessed 2/2/09

<sup>412</sup> Marshall (2003) 184.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid.

as an excuse to engage the army against the protestors. Although regime officials avoided overtly asking Perisic to intervene directly, they made statements implying that “if clashes between the two groups occurred, that the army should intervene.”<sup>414</sup> Fortunately for the protestors, Perisic declined.

### ***Decreasing the Cost of Accommodation***

Opposition forces did not do an adequate job of allaying fears about the potential costs of accommodation. Officers afterwards reported feeling that they did not entirely trust the activists to refrain from violent behavior – one officer interviewed recalled that:

I had a few colleagues who were really the biggest fans of the opposition that I ever saw. One was a platoon commander that I knew, and I asked him, ‘how can it happen that you are such a great fan of the opposition, but then you will go tomorrow to the demonstration and beat the people?’ And he said ‘Listen. They don’t know that I’m on their side, and they may just try to hit me.’<sup>415</sup>

It appears that there were some attempts to convince members of the military that the intent of the demonstrations was nonviolent – opposition politician Zoran Zivkovic recalls that “in 1996/97, the main objective of communication with military representatives was to avoid human victims.”<sup>416</sup> However, he noted that the extent of communication was substantially less significant than it would ultimately be in 2000.<sup>417</sup>

The professional costs of a regime change were also viewed as prohibitively high, particularly within the Interior Ministry. Since 1991, decision-making powers had been concentrated in the office of the Minister of Internal Affairs, who decided police appointments in all towns and municipalities in Serbia. This politicized the police,

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<sup>414</sup> General Momcilo Perisic. Interview. Belgrade, April 9, 2008.

<sup>415</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic, retired police officer, interview by author, Belgrade, 8/30/06

<sup>416</sup> Zoran Zivkovic, emailed responses to interview questions, 4/30/08

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

increasing the potential risks of accommodation— a phenomenon particularly relevant as the ranks ascended.<sup>418</sup> This meant that while many low and mid-ranking police officers had been unhappy with their lot under Milosevic for some time, few wanted to risk losing a job that paid necessary bills and was, they believed, their best opportunity for revenue.<sup>419</sup>

Fear of sanctions by the regime in response to disobedience also motivated officers. Susan Woodward has noted that a shift in Milosevic's power occurred during the 1990s when individual fears about families and personal well-being outstripped other motivations.<sup>420</sup> One former state security officer, who used Maslow's pyramid of motivations to describe the changes in police decision-making recalled that “as our existence became worse and worse, motivation changed to how you can survive. How you can sustain your family, and how can you avoid being arrested by your own people or killed and left somewhere in a ditch?”<sup>421</sup>

### **Demonstrating Likelihood of Success**

Finally, without a viable alternative to the status quo, few soldiers or police officers were willing to take significant risks to support the opposition. Despite the fact that the challengers were able at one point to muster 500,000 demonstrators on the streets of Belgrade, insularity, disunity and an unwillingness to actively exploit security force

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<sup>418</sup> Senior-level Interior Ministry officer, Republic of Serbia. Telephone interview. August 26, 2006

<sup>419</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Republic of Serbia. Personal interview. April 8, 2008. Many had been involved police structures since high school.

<sup>420</sup> Woodward (1995) 376-86. Cited by Christopher Tunnard “From State-Controlled Media to the ‘Anarchy’ of the Internet: the Changing Influence of Communications and Information in Serbia in the 1990s” *Journal of Southeast Europe and Black Sea Studies*, May, 2003 Volume 3, No. 2,

<sup>421</sup> Senior official, SDB (former). Personal interview. April 7, 2008.

cleavages contributed to perceptions that the demonstrations were unlikely to end with the assumption of national power by the opposition.<sup>422</sup>

Deep cleavages between civil society groups, the political opposition, and the student demonstrators contributed to perceptions of challenger weakness. Disunity among opposition elites has been widely cited as a cause of opposition failure in 1996/1997.<sup>423</sup> Splits within the *Zajedno* coalition were considerable. One western reporter covering the Serbian political scene recalls at one rally “literally witnessing a fist fight between Draskovic’s and Djinjic’s bodyguards over who was going to speak first.”<sup>424</sup>

The gulf between the political and the student protests were also notable – in one study, the parallel protests were categorized as entirely separate events by Serbian sociologists observing data at the time.<sup>425</sup> According to one poll, fully 86% of the students protesting believed that they should remain as independent as possible from the political *Zajedno* protests.<sup>426</sup> As Paul D’Aneiri notes, Milosevic’s decision to concede the local elections further fractured the protests – while students continued to demand Milosevic’s ouster, some political opposition leaders ended their participation after the concessions.<sup>427</sup>

Fractures in the ranks of challengers significantly lowered the optimism for those within the security forces who wanted change. As one military official recalls of that time “the fact that the opposition was too fractured contributed to the slow pace of dissatisfaction within military. When you see that the opposition has no unity, it makes you think – ‘what is going on?’”<sup>428</sup> A mid-ranking police officer highlighted the primary difference between 1996/1997 and 2000 as

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<sup>422</sup> For numbers and discussion of disunity, see D’Aneiri (2006)

<sup>423</sup> D’Aneiri (2006) 246

<sup>424</sup> Marshall (2003) 185

<sup>425</sup> Mladen Lazic (ed.) *Protest in Belgrade. Winter of Discontent* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999) 2

<sup>426</sup> Dragan Popadic “Student Protests: Comparative Analysis” in Lazic (1999) 159

<sup>427</sup> D’Aneiri (2006) 340

<sup>428</sup> Colonel, Military Intelligence, Republic of Serbia. Personal interview. March 13, 2008.

the lack of “willingness between opposition leaders to act as one.” However, he noted that “on our side, we had a pretty good force... so when the police showed resolute action it solved all problems.”<sup>429</sup>

Perceived weakness of the challengers – also evidenced by their inability to draw significant crowds – made any decision to disobey orders difficult, even for those who were convinced of the normative value of the protestors’ efforts. Officers who might have otherwise supported the opposition noted that there were “too small a number of people - only fifty or sixty thousand - and we had to decide.<sup>430</sup> Additionally, the lack of diversity within the coalition and the fact that workers were not mobilized prompted even those marching on the streets to doubt the likelihood of their success.<sup>431</sup> The majority of those participating in the protests did not believe that their actions would be sufficient to significantly challenge the Milosevic regime – of a survey conducted at the time, 26% of participants thought their actions sufficient. Forty-three percent thought there also needed to be a general workers strike.<sup>432</sup>

Another 25% of the crowd believed that there also needed to be international pressure brought to bear against Milosevic in order for the demonstrations to be successful.<sup>433</sup> Relationships maintained between US diplomat Richard Holbrooke and Milosevic made it seem to Serbian citizens that it was “useless to vote against him because US and Europe would support him, no matter what.”<sup>434</sup> Interestingly, military officers were also acutely aware of international positions – one colonel observed later that “Milosevic was

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<sup>429</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Republic of Serbia. Personal interview. April 8, 2008.

<sup>430</sup> Radovan Milisavljevic, Police officer (ret.), Republic of Serbia. Personal interview, August 20, 2006.

<sup>431</sup> Mladen Lazic (ed.) *Protest in Belgrade. Winter of Discontent* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), 15.

<sup>432</sup> Slobodan Cvejic, “General Character of the Protest and Prospects” in Mladen Lazic (ed.) *Protest in Belgrade. Winter of Discontent* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), 75.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

<sup>434</sup> James Lyon (ICG). Personal interview. August 25, 2008.

the key player – this confused people - if the international community says he's important, you find yourself indecisive about which measure to take.”<sup>435</sup>

Finally, opposition forces appeared to be unwilling or unable to drive cleavages through security forces. There was little effort made to exploit what support challengers might have had. Indeed, one retired interior ministry officer attributes the opposition failure to the fact that the opposition “didn't succeed in penetrating the security structure”<sup>436</sup> While a number of issues – including perceived likelihood of success – may account for Perisic’s unwillingness to fully renounce the regime, Perisic has since argued Djinjic’s hesitation in contacting him played a significant role.<sup>437</sup> A Djinjic associate confirms that the politician was particularly nervous about establishing ties within the military and interior ministry, recalling that “I brought my friends who were generals... about 10 generals... plus some people from the police just to show him that he had support... Djinjic was scared. He said ‘what is going on.’”<sup>438</sup> While one can understand the skittishness in the repressive atmosphere of Belgrade in 1996/1997, the lack of initiative appears to have hindered the opposition’s ability to exploit fractures within the security forces and strengthen their perceived likelihood of success.

### **Conclusion: Lessons Learned**

As was demonstrated in the episodes studied in this chapter, significant evolution took place in the implementation of the five strategic objectives between 1991 and 2000. Perhaps most significantly, it became clear over the course of the decade that explicit

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<sup>435</sup> Colonel, Military Intelligence, Republic of Serbia. Personal interview. February 20, 2008.

<sup>436</sup> Senior official, SDB (former). Personal interview. April 7, 2008.

<sup>437</sup> General Momcilo Perisic. Personal interview. April 9, 2008.

<sup>438</sup> Belgrade transatlantic security expert. Personal interview. April 3, 2008.

attention would need to be paid to the opinions, positions, and concerns of individuals in the security forces, and that their decisions and behaviors would influence the outcome of the events.<sup>439</sup> With these considerations in mind, challengers in 2000 were able to develop more effective tactics and strategies.

Recognition of the concerns and core issues for individuals in the security forces helped challengers to establish legitimacy relative to the regime. In turn, changes in relative legitimacy altered the lens through which some individuals in the security forces perceived the 2000 struggle as they made decisions on how to interact with challengers. During March 1991, in contrast, Milosevic's relative popularity within police and military forces, as well as a pervasive skepticism about the persona and tactics of the political opposition, meant that few individuals were persuaded to change their behavior or loyalties. By 1996-1997, Milosevic was already an unpopular leader, but challengers were unable to parlay ongoing frustrations into a critical event eliciting widespread defection.

As they worked to alter the balance of relative legitimacy, challengers in 2000 learned to successfully capitalize on their own strengths and regime vulnerabilities. Milosevic's decline in legitimacy in the wake of recent failures in Kosovo was exacerbated by clever mockery of the leader's purported patriotism and heroism. The regime's misuse of security forces also became a key talking point in communications between challengers and security forces, as did, ultimately, the exposure of election fraud.

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<sup>439</sup> As veterans of previous protests in Serbia, the leaders of the movement recalled that “since the students demonstrations [of 1996-1997], it was obvious that the state was using...the police as a key tool of repression. So we said we need to address these tools and deal with them. It was also for protection - they were trying to attack us.” Srdja Popovic. Personal interview. August 24, 2006.

Defense was also important, as challengers learned to actively diffuse negative propaganda through humor and consistent messaging about their commitment to nonviolent tactics. This had been performed with partial success in 1996-1997, and ignored entirely in 1991. The political opposition decided for the first time in 2000 to take security force opinions into account when choosing a candidate, even including two retired VJ generals within their ranks. With Otpor, the DOS coalition worked to gain the support of a broad swath of Serbian society, including independent media, coal miners, former military officers, and the Orthodox Church. In contrast, demonstrations in 1991 and 1996-1997 were primarily urban elite phenomena and included some elements viewed by security forces as unsavory.

However, perceiving that normative factors alone were not enough to tip the scales, challengers also began to take steps alter calculations of costs of repression and accommodation. Planners in 2000 had recognized that for the final showdown, when the threatened costs of accommodation were highest for those at the top of the chain of command, they would need crowds large enough that the costs of repression would serve as a deterrent. Throughout the campaign, Otpor honed its strategy of mobilizing its broad net of community ties to rapidly respond to arrests and censure those police officers engaging in brutality. Effective communication about repression and media coverage helped to mobilize outrage against abuses – unlike 1991, the commitment to nonviolent methods removed pretexts for violence.

Understanding and acknowledging the costs involved in accommodation also helped challengers to facilitate a nonviolent transition of power. By maintaining internal discipline and assuring the personal safety of police officers and soldiers, they made it

easier to avoid repression than had previous challengers. While the effects and long-term implications of attempts to lower the professional costs of regime change for individuals at the top of the power ministries remain controversial, it is clear that the consideration figured into the opposition's strategy.

Finally a critical difference between 2000 and previous movements was the challengers' ability to demonstrate that they were likely to succeed. Others have noted that unification of political parties around a viable candidate increased popular confidence that the opposition could assume power.<sup>440</sup> The same observations were being made by soldiers and police officers as they watched the 2000 campaign unfold. Participation of new sectors of society was also cited by individuals within the security forces as a factor that they examined when determining likelihood of success: present in 2000 case, it had been missing in 1996/1997 and 1991.<sup>441</sup> Much of the change can be attributed to the self-appointed role played by the civic group Otpor as the nation's social "glue," and the group's strategic attempts over the course of the year 2000 to mobilize new constituencies throughout Serbia. Finally, the opposition successfully drove cracks in the security forces deeper in 2000: as some individuals in uniform began to shift their loyalties towards the challengers – whether though conviction or utilitarian calculus – they contributed to a cascade effect. Opposition forces were then able to successfully exploit these wedges by communicating with allies in the security forces and exacerbating uncertainties within the ranks.

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<sup>440</sup> D'Aneiri cites "unity of opposition elites" as a key factor in determining likelihood of success in the Serbia case, D'Aneiri (2006) 346.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid*

## CHAPTER THREE: UKRAINE

### ***Introduction***

On Monday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004, the Ukrainian people took their grievances to the streets. The previous evening, amidst widespread allegations of election fraud, the second round of the presidential elections were projected by official tallies in favor of Victor Yanukovych, President Leonid Kuchma's Prime Minister and chosen successor.<sup>1</sup> Victor Yushchenko, a reformist opposition leader popular in the Western regions of the nation, had called his supporters to Kiev in response. Over the following month, more than a million Ukrainians would flock to the capital.

For some observers strolling through the crowds on the first frosty evenings of the "Orange Revolution," an increasingly festive atmosphere belied the danger of the situation. As had been the case in Serbia of 2000, the regime seemed unlikely to go down without a fight. The now-confirmed poisoning of Yushchenko in early September revealed the lengths that some in the regime were willing to go in order to preserve their hold on power. "Tiananmen was the thought percolating through my head," one Western diplomat recalls. "There were certainly human rights concerns – the prospect for violence was palpable."<sup>2</sup>

Many of the dynamics at play in triggering the loyalty shifts that ultimately did occur were similar to those observed in Serbia in 2000. This was not entirely coincidental. Former Otpor activists from Serbia had been active in training the civic group Pora (meaning, "It's

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<sup>1</sup> The first round of elections, on October 31, was declared a tie between two candidates – Victor Yanukovych and Victor Yushchenko - prompting an electoral run-off. Domestic and international observers had reported widespread cases of voter manipulation and fraud in both the first and second rounds of the elections.

<sup>2</sup> Western diplomat, Personal Interview. June 1, 2005.

Time”) and sharing best practices from their own experiences.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Ukrainian challengers had drawn their own lessons from previous failures in 2001.<sup>4</sup>

A month-long gap between election rounds – with a close first round on October 31 and a second round run-off on November 21<sup>st</sup> – and the extended nature of the demonstrations and tent city meant that the acute stages of the political crisis were allowed to build for longer than they had in Serbia. Likewise, loyalty shifts unfolded over the course of a longer period of time than they had in Serbia. Such a paced timeline arguably offers analysts more concrete data points and a rich timeline of events from which to parse decision points of individuals within the security forces.

One interesting dynamic observed in the Ukraine 2004 case is the sequencing of decision-making and loyalty shifts over the course of the conflict. Some demonstrations of loyalty shifts – subversive leaks to the opposition, public renunciation of the regime, and disregard for orders – occurred relatively early in the episode, changing the dynamics for other elements of the security forces. These initial actions served as an important chink in the armor of the regime, providing expanded political space in which challengers could operate. Members of the security forces who had quietly supported the opposition but feared penalties imposed by the regime were emboldened as they saw their colleagues and others taking risks. Others unconvinced of the legitimacy of the opposition’s cause or with a greater stake in maintaining the status quo were also forced to reconsider probable outcomes.

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<sup>3</sup> Pora activists were trained in April 2004 in Nova Sad by the Serbian Center for Nonviolent Resistance, made up of veterans of the 2000 Otpor campaign. Additional trainings were held during the summer of 2004. Linkages between the Serbian, Georgian, and Ukrainian nonviolent uprisings provide evidence of the “demonstration effect” (also “contagion” or “diffusion”) described by Thomas Greene in *Comparative Revolutionary Movements*, 147-149.

<sup>4</sup> Vladislav Kaskiv, Personal Interview. June 11, 2005.

Ukraine's relative size – the country has nearly five times the population of Serbia – and East-West split in political orientations (Eastern Ukraine is typically pro-Russian, Western Ukraine gravitates more closely toward Europe) also add a unique dimension to the case. Because it was often difficult to persuade security forces – particularly within the Interior Ministry – in the east, challengers made a strategic decision early in the campaign to concentrate the bulk of their activities within the more ideologically sympathetic western and central regions of Ukraine. While some attempts were made to persuade security force members in the east, the general approach was reflective of Sun Tzu's to identify and exploit enemy vulnerabilities, and offered challengers room to maneuver before the crisis peaked.<sup>5</sup>

Examination of an earlier episode, in which police responded violently to the 'Ukraine without Kuchma' protests of early 2001, provides context and contrast to the 2004 Orange Revolution. The 2001 events, sparked by the brutal murder of journalist Georgiy Gongadze at the hands of Kuchma henchmen, offer important examples of strategic failure and underscores the progress made by Ukrainian opposition and civil society leaders between 2000 and 2004.

## **Security Forces: Background**

### ***Interior Ministry***

The Interior Ministry, considered to be the regime's most reliable mechanism for potential repression, controlled over 400,000 police and troops in 2004.<sup>6</sup> Of these,

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<sup>5</sup> Sun Tzu writes: critically analyze [the enemy] to know the estimations for gain and loss...probe them to know where they have an excess, where an insufficiency..." Sawyer (1986) 10

<sup>6</sup> Andriy Lavryk "The option of force" *Halytski Kontrakty*, December 4, 2004.

according to one source, about 386,000 worked directly for the ministry as police officers and 44,000 were members of the paramilitary “interior troops” equipped with tanks and artillery.<sup>7</sup> Both police officers and interior troops are part of a centralized system of agencies underneath the Ministry.<sup>8</sup> Local police were divided regionally along the 25 regions of Ukraine – called “oblasts” – plus two for major cities Kiev and Sevastopol, making 27 regional authorities.<sup>9</sup> As was true in the case of Serbia, the regime had invested heavily in the Interior Ministry at the expense of the Ministry of Defense.

Interior troop regiments Berkut and BARS were headquartered in Kiev and included detachments in both eastern and western Ukraine.<sup>10</sup> Berkut consists of one regiment, seven battalions and 19 companies. Charged with protecting law and order, fighting organized crime and controlling mass riots, Berkut units drive armored vehicles and carry modern light weapons.<sup>11</sup> BARS missions include keeping public order, fighting armed criminal gangs, and quelling prison uprisings.<sup>12</sup> BARS also includes an “Omega” sniper team.<sup>13</sup> Interior troops were well trained, well paid, and often heavily indoctrinated.<sup>14</sup> During the weeks prior to the elections, many had received additional training in dispersing demonstrations.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Dennis Jay Kenney et al., Assessing the Fit Between U.S. Sponsored Training and the Needs of Ukrainian Police Agencies” (Unpublished report, made available by the US Department of Justice, August 2003.) Annex A. Available online at: <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/414655/Assessing-the-Fit-Between-US-Sponsored-Training-and-the-Needs-of-Ukrainian-Police-Agencies---2001>)

<sup>9</sup> Local police are further divided into districts within each oblast. Annex A. Kenney et al, (2003)

<sup>10</sup> Andriy Lavryk "The option of force " *Halytski Kontrakty*, December 4, 2004

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Tom Warner, “Riot Police hold fire in uneasy stand-off with Ukrainian protesters.” *Financial Times* November 25, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Andriy Lavryk "The option of force " *Halytski Kontrakty*, December 4, 2004; “Riot Police hold fire in uneasy stand-off with Ukrainian protesters.” Available from World News Connection. Tom Warner, *Financial Times* November 25, 2004.

Under Kuchma, the Interior Ministry was regarded as the most corrupt of Ukraine's power ministries. Bribes were a prerequisite for promotion, with some positions costing tens of thousands of dollars.<sup>16</sup> There was also a strong pro-regime bias. In May 2004 Bilokon reportedly declared during a meeting with his regional subordinates that "we are told that the militia should be beyond politics. Let me tell you this - we are the governmental body, the armed governmental body. From this very definition it is understandable that we should support the government... We will win in the first round of the elections - and we will drink for three days then!"<sup>17</sup> The bold statement reflects the entrenched interests at the top of the ministry as well as Bilokon's confidence in the unity of his forces.

The most significant threat to those on Kiev's chilly streets in 2004 was posed by the Interior Ministry troops and special forces massing in and around the city of Kiev. Although no public information has been released on the numbers or units of troops deployed to Kiev, eyewitness reports seem to agree on a total of around 15,000 Interior Ministry troops, including elite BARS and Berkut special forces units from both western and eastern Ukraine.<sup>18</sup> Hundreds of Berkut troops stood unarmed in the first two lines between protestors and the Presidential Administration buildings Kiev. Many more stood armed and waiting outside the city limits of the capital. Over 100 elite BARS officers from Sevastopol, Crimea were also seen guarding the Presidential Administration building,

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<sup>16</sup> See Taras Kuzio, "Kiev Launches Far-Reaching Reform of Interior Ministry" *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 2 Issue 44 (4/4/05.); Western diplomat. Personal interview. May 30, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> "CVU Report on Pre-election Period, April-May 2004" Committee of Voters of Ukraine, Kiev, May 2004

<sup>18</sup> Western diplomat, Personal interview. June 1, 2005. On November 28, reports Yanevskyi in *Chronicles of the Orange Revolution* "Four buses with special forces' unit "Berkut" arrived to Lyuteranska Street (near the Presidential Administration) in the morning. The buses had Crimean plates. All soldiers had big bags, which showed that their stay would be long." Danylo Yanevskyi, *Chronicles of the Orange Revolution* (Kiev: Folio/Channel 5, 2005) excerpts translated from Ukrainian by Inna Shyrokoava.

reportedly with orders to shoot if protestors stormed.<sup>19</sup> The Omega sniper team, according to opposition sources, was positioned on rooftops above the crowds.<sup>20</sup> Members of the Crimean Territorial Command (an Interior Ministry unit temporarily redeployed to the Kiev region) were also increasingly spotted within the city.<sup>21</sup> Brought in from Eastern Ukraine, and cut off from most outside information sources, many were largely unaware of the magnitude and nature of the protests unfolding on the Maidan.<sup>22</sup> Despite mounting evidence to the contrary, Ministry officials had officially denied widespread reports of troop mobilization towards Kiev as “all rumors,” insisting that “no forces are being brought in to Kiev from the regions.”<sup>23</sup>

### ***Ministry of Defense***

In Ukraine, national budget cuts over the fifteen years leading up to the Orange Revolution had left the military with lower pay, less domestic training, and lower morale than their counterparts in the Interior Ministry.<sup>24</sup> In 2000, one Ukrainian colonel estimated that more than 80% of officers would describe the living conditions of their families as

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<sup>19</sup>Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005. The troops were the Crimea and the Donetsk units of OMON (Militia Special Forces Detachments) “Ukraine SBU Chief Turchynov On Orange Revolution,” *Ukrayinska Pravda*, May 29, 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005. Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

Also: Ukraine's Interior Ministry Troops Deny Being Placed on Alert To Quell Protests. *Moscow ITAR-TASS* December 7, 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Lower and mid-level ranks lived in barracks. Dr Victor Tysganov, professor, Academy of the Interior Ministry. Personal interview. June 2 2005.

<sup>23</sup> “Interior ministry denies police massing in Kiev” *Kiev Interfax-Ukraine* November 23, 2004. Accessed via World News Connection. In his *Chronicles of the Orange Revolution*, a detailed account of the events of the period, 5<sup>th</sup> Channel investigative journalist Danylo Yanevsky reports that on November 23, “At the railway station “Zaporizhia-2”, troops were visibly active. Artillery-type weapons were seen being loaded at the train. The troops refused to give any explanations, but they did not object that the ammunition was to depart for Kiev.” Danylo Yanevsky, *Chronicles of the Orange Revolution* (Kiev: Folio/Channel 5, 2005) excerpts translated from Ukrainian by Inna Shyrokova.

<sup>24</sup> Tom Warner, “Riot police hold fire in uneasy stand-off with Ukrainian protestors.” *Financial Times*, November 25, 2004.

“below average” or “low.”<sup>25</sup> Despite efforts to professionalize the army, recruitment of the 200,000 ground troops was based primarily on conscription.<sup>26</sup>

However, the military had received the highest levels of public confidence among national security institutions, despite occasional setbacks. Reputed to be the most democratically reformed of the security institutions, and the military had accepted the greatest degree of Western assistance in implementing reforms.<sup>27</sup> Through NATO’s Partnership for Peace program, Ukrainian military personnel train alongside NATO forces in peacekeeping and other military exercises.<sup>28</sup> Senior Ukrainian officers regularly participate in NATO educational programs and many maintain contact with US and European military officers.<sup>29</sup> The US International Military Education and Training (IMET) program has also sponsored training programs in the US, England, and Germany for over 1,000 Ukrainian military officers.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps significantly, General Mykola Petruk, the ground forces commander who ultimately would step up against the mobilization of interior troops, was the graduate of an IMET program in the United States and is reported to have been dramatically influenced by his experiences.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> “Civil-military Relations in Ukraine: On the way from Form to Substance” Anatoliy Grytsenko, *NATO Fellowship Programme report*, 2000

<sup>26</sup> Tom Warner, “Riot police hold fire in uneasy stand-off with Ukrainian protestors.” *Financial Times*, November 25, 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Oleksiy Melnyk and Leonid Polyakov “Ukraine: the Armed Forces and Beyond” . *Security-Sector Reform and Transparency-Building: Needs and Options for Ukraine and Moldova*, Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies named after Oleksander Razumkov (Razumkov Center) 1/1/2004

<sup>28</sup> “Key Areas of NATO Ukraine Cooperation” <http://www.nato.int/issues/nato-ukraine/cooperation.html>. Updated October 17, 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Although the Kiev NATO office maintained a low-key stance during the Orange Revolution, the long-term influence of NATO programs on the perspectives of Ukrainian soldiers merits further research.

<sup>30</sup> Major General Nicholas Krawciw, U.S. Army, panel presentation: “Ukraine’s Armed Forces: On the Way to Join NATO?” The American Enterprise Institute, December 10, 2004. Although some interior ministry personnel have attended the programs, the majority of participants come from the Ministry of Defense.

<sup>31</sup> After General Petruk returned from a training mission in the US and began implementing reforms, one of his superior officers reportedly asked US General Nicholas Krawciw: “Krawciw, what did you do to Petruk when he was in the United States?” Krawciw, panel presentation. December 10, 2004.

In the days running up to the political crisis, it was unknown what steps the political leadership of the ministry would take. Defense Minister General Alexander Kuzmuk, considered a Kuchma loyalist, had replaced the pro-Western Yevhen Marchuk in late September 2004.<sup>32</sup> On Oct 28, Russian president Vladimir Putin attended a large military parade in Kiev to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city's liberation from the Germans in WWII. The anniversary was held one week late, and was interpreted by some as a last-minute demonstration of support Yanukovych reinforced with a timely exhibition of potential force.<sup>33</sup>

According to reports from opposition MPs, the ministry mobilized 5,000 army infantry for the election period, which were either involved in maneuvers in the Kiev region, or based in camps in the city's suburbs.<sup>34</sup> Eyewitnesses reported that at the railway station "Zaporizhia-2" in Zaporizhia in south-central Ukraine, military forces were visibly active, and artillery-type weapons were seen being loaded onto the train. Although soldiers "refused to give any explanations... they did not object that the ammunition was to depart for Kyiv."<sup>35</sup> While it appeared unthinkable for most within Ukraine that the army would be used against the people, the political leadership at the top of the Defense Ministry maintained ambiguity until late in the game.

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<sup>32</sup> For commentary on the changeover, see Taras Kuzio, "Russianization of Ukrainian Security Policy." *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 1, Issue 92 (September 24, 2004).

<sup>33</sup> Askold Krushelnnycky, "Putin's Role in Kiev's Timely Show of Force is Denounced." *The Independent*, October 29, 2004.

<sup>34</sup> Speech by Volodymyr Strelkovych. Cited in "Ukraine mobilizes troops for Presidential Election" *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* 10/22/04. Immediately prior to the first round of elections in late October, large numbers of army troops had been called to Kiev for a Soviet-style military parade, ostensibly for an early commemoration of Ukraine's liberation Nazi rule. Attended by Yanukovych and Russian President Vladimir Putin, the show of force was denounced by Yuschenko, who was quoted remarking that: "On the day of voting there will be several tens of thousands of men in uniforms near Kiev...or has the government simply forgotten the date on which Kiev was liberated?" Askold Krushelnnycky, "Putin Role in Kiev's Timely Show of Force is Denounced" *The Independent* October 29, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> Danylo Yanevskyi (2005).

### ***Intelligence: Sluzhba Bespeky Ukrayiny (SBU)***

The Security Services of Ukraine, (*Sluzhba Bespeky Ukrayiny*, or SBU) is the nation's primary domestic intelligence center. Established in March 1992, the SBU was a direct successor to the Ukrainian branch of the Soviet KGB.<sup>36</sup> The institution is formally tasked with two broad missions: to protect Ukraine and its citizens from interference by foreign intelligence services and to prevent and expose crimes against "the peace and safety of humanity."<sup>37</sup> In practice, however, heavy politicization of the service meant the SBU was also used to disrupt activities of potential challengers.

The SBU chief at the time of the 2004 elections was Lt. General Igor Smeshko, a Kuchma friend and a career military officer, who had taken command of the institution in 2003. Its 38,000 employees internally divided among competing factions, the SBU was alleged to have been riddled corruption including blackmail, arms trading, and consorting with Russian organized crime.<sup>38</sup> Many within the service were KGB holdovers: Smeshko, who served for eight years in Washington and Western Europe, was the first SBU leader not to have started his career in the Russian spy agency.<sup>39</sup>

The SBU also controlled an elite "Alpha" unit, trained and equipped for special forces operations. Alpha, the successor to a KGB special unit group, is composed of "two kinds of combat units – 'storm' and 'protective' – as well as support units" and engage in a variety

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<sup>36</sup>Harasymiw, Bohdan. 2003."Policing, Democratization and Political Leadership in Postcommunist Ukraine." Canadian Journal of Political Science. 36: 2 (June) 329; CJ Chivers, "How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation's Path," *The New York Times*, January 17, 2005.

<sup>37</sup>On the formal missions of the SBU, see Bohdan. (2003) 329.

<sup>38</sup>CJ Chivers, "How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation's Path," *The New York Times*, January 17, 2005.

<sup>39</sup>Gordon Bennet, "The SBU – The Security Service of Ukraine" Conflict Studies Research Centre, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom. Central and Eastern Europe Series, September 2004. Online at [www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/reports/2004/04-25-GB.pdf](http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/reports/2004/04-25-GB.pdf)

of tasks across Ukraine.<sup>40</sup>

### **2004: The Orange Revolution**

The political opposition coalition, Our Ukraine, and civic group PORA had stepped up their efforts between the first and second round of elections. About a week after the first round, PORA set up a tent camp at Kontraktova Square, an academic neighborhood in Kiev, and attempted to raise local awareness through skits, music concerts, and other nonviolent acts of protest. On the Sunday of the second round of elections, Our Ukraine organizers, Stetskiv, Bessmertny and Filenko began to set up the stage in Kiev's Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti), known colloquially as the "Maidan." This cobble-stoned square, surrounded by buildings of trade unions and hotels, would serve as the hub of events for the following weeks. As election poll results came in Pora activists announced the results – which favored Yushchenko by 10 percent – from the Maidan stage.<sup>41</sup> The following morning, with initial official results favoring a Yanukovych win and citing credible claims of electoral fraud, Yushchenko asked those who had voted for him to come to Kiev and "defend [their] choice."<sup>42</sup>

The ultimate scope of the post-election protests in Kiev exceeded the expectations of both the regime and the Our Ukraine leadership.<sup>43</sup> On Monday, November 22, the day after Yushchenko's call, 100,000 protestors arrived. Over the next 24 hours, according to the

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<sup>40</sup> "Ukraine" Special operations.com. Online at <http://www.specialoperations.com/Foreign/Ukraine/Default.htm>.

<sup>41</sup> The MPs were initially stopped and fined by the Kiev police as they erected the stage, but were ultimately able to continue.

<sup>42</sup> Quote cited in "Viktor Yushchenko: We are to Defend Our Choice!" *Charter 97 News*, November 22, 2004. Online at <http://www.charter97.org/eng/news/2004/11/22/pobeda>.

<sup>43</sup> Yevhen Zolotariov. Personal interview. May 30, 2005; Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

estimates of one observer, the number had nearly doubled.<sup>44</sup> By Wednesday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, hundreds of thousands more had arrived and by the end the first week, according to estimates, over a million Ukrainians had gathered in Kiev.<sup>45</sup> Regions around the country were represented, though the crowds tended Western Ukraine.<sup>46</sup>

The map below, distributed by Our Ukraine volunteers during the protests, offers a graphic depiction of the scene on the snowy streets of the Maidan.<sup>47</sup> Units of interior ministry troops guarding the Presidential Administration building are depicted, as is the tent town erected by Yanukovych supporters. Nearby, large tents erected by Our Ukraine allies offered food, water, warm clothes, and medical assistance to protestors. The arrows represent the movement of groups of protestors towards the Presidential Administration building and parliament.

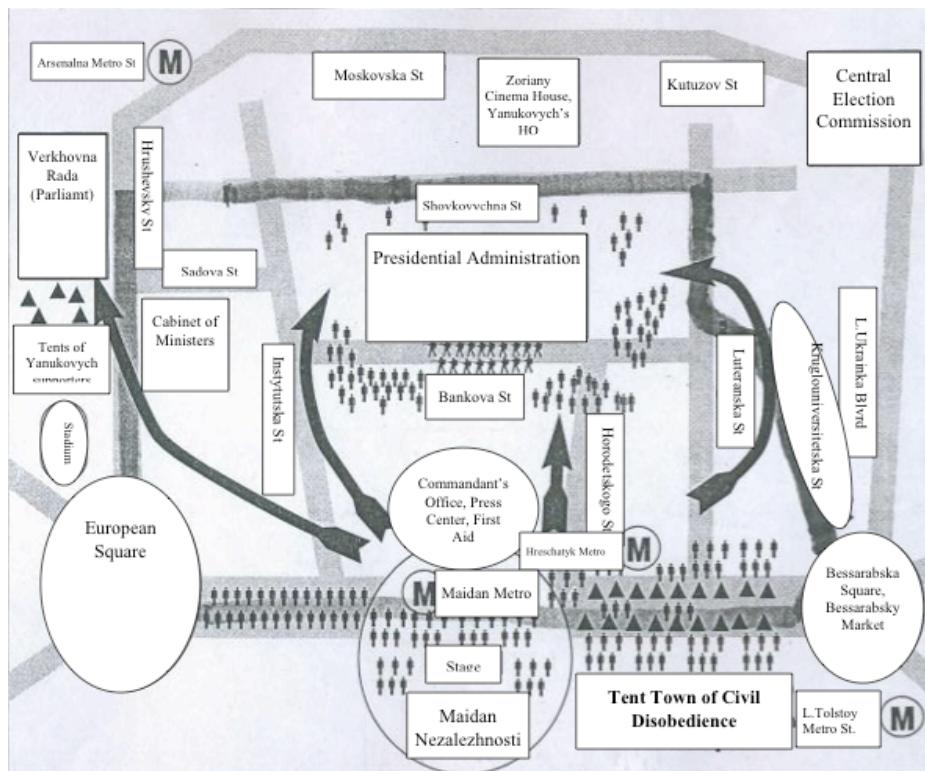
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<sup>44</sup> Western diplomat, Personal interview. June 1, 2005.

<sup>45</sup> A Case Study of the Civic Campaign PORA.” Bezverkha, Chupryna, and Kaskiv. (April 2005.)

<sup>46</sup> Citing Democratic Initiatives and IFES polls, Taras Kuzio notes that a “striking 35% of western Ukrainians took part in the Orange Revolution, and 23% of west-central Ukrainians. Besides western Ukrainians, more than one-third of the residents of Kyiv participated, a figure close to that of Galicia. These figures were far lower in eastern (15%), east-central (9%), and southern Ukraine (8%) respectively.” Taras Kuzio, “New Data Creates Demographic Profile of Orange Revolutionaries, Voters.” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 2, Issue 156 (August 10, 2005).

<sup>47</sup> Map given to author by Voldomir Filenko and Taras Stetskiv, June 10, 2005. Translation by Inna Shyrokova.



## Security Forces: Behaviors and Decisions

The following sections will examine the responses from within the interior ministry, military, and intelligence services to challengers prior to and during the Orange Revolution. Before the demonstrations, political leaders had signaled their confidence in the loyalty of their security forces. Although Kuchma had said in early November that there would be no violent crackdown, his Prosecutor-General, Hennadiy Vasiliyev pointedly stated that Ukraine's security institutions were "prepared to put an end quickly and firmly to any lawlessness."<sup>48</sup> In late October, Ukrainian Interior Minister Mykola Bilokon - a Kuchma

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<sup>48</sup> Quote from Kuchma cited in Taras Kuzio "Did Ukraine's Security Service Really Prevent Bloodshed During the Orange Revolution?", *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Issue 16 1/24/05. Hennadiy Vasiliyev was quoted saying: "We appeal to the organizers of mass protests to assume responsibility for their possible consequences... We want to assure everyone that in the event of any threat to constitutional order, and the security of our citizens, we are prepared to put an end quickly and firmly to any lawlessness." Cited in

loyalist - publicly discounted the possibility of a "Georgian scenario."<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Russian political consultant Marat Gelman, an advisor to Victor Yanukovych's campaign, explicitly predicted that Ukraine's security forces would remain loyal to Kuchma, and thus to Yanukovych.<sup>50</sup>

Most analysts of the events of November/December 2004 concur that while orders to mobilize Interior Ministry troops were given, they were most likely not issued by Kuchma.<sup>51</sup> Though the leader's motivations and the basis for his decision-making during that period are not fully known, it became increasingly clear as the crisis progressed that there was little appetite from most within the security forces for a bloody resolution. Even had Kuchma wished to use force to clear protestors from Maidan, wavering loyalties in the Ukrainian security forces would have created a dilemma. As one western observer succinctly put it, "what do you do if you try to use the stick and it breaks in your hands?"<sup>52</sup>

Unlike the Serbian case, where cascading defections moved very quickly once the crisis had escalated, a visible breakdown was observable over the course of a number of days. Within the Interior Ministry, loyalties were split. Many local Kiev and western Ukrainian officers – including cadets of the Interior Ministry academy – immediately and openly

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<sup>49</sup> "Ukraine ready to crush election lawlessness" *Reuters*, November 22, 2004. Vasilyev originally claimed that the proclamation also represented the views of interior minister Bilokon, and head of security services General Igor Smeshko, but Smeshko later publicly rejected Vasilyev's statement.

<sup>50</sup> Bilokon was referring to the "Rose Revolution" of November 2003 in which Georgian president Eduard Shevardnadze was forced to resign after indications of electoral fraud. "Ukrainian Interior Minister Says Georgian Scenario Impossible" *Moscow Interfax*, December 26, 2004.

<sup>51</sup> Taras Kuzio, Did Ukraine's Security Service Really Prevent Bloodshed During the Orange Revolution?" *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Issue 16, January 24, 2005.

<sup>52</sup> The order to mobilize on the night of the 28<sup>th</sup> was likely initiated by someone else in his political circle. Deputy Director of the Presidential Administration Vasyl Baziv allegedly told the *Financial Times* : "I know that many representatives of the state apparatus lobbied the president to impose a state of emergency. They said it is time to use state power. The president, from the first moment, was consistently against the use of force." According to this report, Presidential Administration Director Viktor Medvedchuk and Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych approached President Leonid Kuchma with the idea of military intervention in the crisis situation, but Kuchma resisted the pressure. Stefan Wagstyl, "Ukraine President Spurned Yanukovych's Pressure Over Protesters," *Financial Times* January 14, 2005. (Retrieved from Lexis Nexis)

<sup>53</sup> Western diplomat. Personal interview. May 30, 2005.

supported Yushchenko. Units brought in from eastern Ukraine were more generally supportive of the status quo, though some reportedly balked when mobilized outside of Kiev on the night of November 28<sup>th</sup>. Within the military, as well, opinions differed, although a general aversion to political use by the regime ran from the conscripts through the officer corps. SBU loyalties were also divided, with some agents reportedly attempting to play both sides. Ultimately, internal divisions proved a key factor in limiting the ability of regime members still grasping for power in Ukraine to effectively deploy the security forces as a coercive tool.

### ***Interior Ministry***

Before the elections, Bilokon had given numerous warnings that he would not hesitate to break up any "unlawful" post-election protests.<sup>53</sup> He had also proclaimed his confidence in his forces' compliance, stating that "I trust police officers, both the special units and the interior forces. The majority of them know what, how and when to do."<sup>54</sup>

Throughout 2004, police responses to opposition gatherings had varied. In April 2004, four Members of Parliament from the "Our Ukraine" political bloc and numerous observers and voters were beaten while protesting electoral fraud during mayoral elections.<sup>55</sup> Over the summer, student activists had been arrested and interrogated during rallies and after distributing opposition stickers and newsletters.<sup>56</sup> Kiev police tear-gassed a mid-September candlelight vigil commemorating the death of Georgiy Gongadze, a journalist murdered

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<sup>53</sup> *Ukrayinska pravda*, October 29, 2004, cited in Taras Kuzio "Did Ukraine's Security Service Really Prevent Bloodshed During the Orange Revolution?" *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Issue 16 January 24, 2005.

<sup>54</sup> "Interior minister says Georgian scenario impossible." *Moscow Interfax*, October 26, 2004.

<sup>55</sup> "Our Ukraine Newsletter" Issue 9, April 24, 2004. Available online at <http://www.ourukraine.org/newsletter/issue9/>

<sup>56</sup> See also, "Ukrainian Police Release 18 Students Detained During Protest March to Kiev, *Kiev Interfax*, August 5, 2005.

three years earlier at the hands of regime thugs.<sup>57</sup> During a late October pre-election rally in Kiev several protestors were beaten by undercover police.<sup>58</sup> On November 13, Berkut officers broke up a demonstration in Sumy, beating participants with bats and detaining some for over a week.<sup>59</sup>

Despite such willingness to use force, some within the Interior Ministry were also showing subtle evidence of foot-dragging, and subverting behavior by the fall of 2004. One journalist recalls a childhood friend, a police captain, who observed prior to the elections that “it’s impossible to work there. If somebody tries to give us orders, we sabotage these orders in little ways.”<sup>60</sup> Such foot-dragging particularly manifested itself in the failure of Kiev traffic police to comply with orders to stop the initial inflow of protestors into the capital. Participants report that there had initially been attempts by highway police to stop incoming traffic, but that within the first 48 hours, the overwhelming flow and willingness of travelers to seek alternate routes led the police to largely abandon their efforts.<sup>61</sup> Soon after, people reported viewing highway police distributing small orange flags with the Yushchenko campaign logo to drivers.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> After the first round of elections, six activists demanding that election results be posted in accordance with the law were charged with insubordination to the police. When a group of lawyers and family members later gathered asked where they were being detained, the crowd was allegedly beaten and sprayed with tear gas.

“Ukraine: Arrested for requesting election results.” Amnesty International press release, November 14, 2004.

<sup>58</sup> Jan Maksymiuk “Analysis: A Game Without Rules” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* October 27, 2004.

By <http://www.rferl.org/Content/Article/1055541.html>

<sup>59</sup> The Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union reported that “Berkut police units “together with unidentified individuals in civilian clothes, dispersed the demonstration. Bats were used, as well as teargas. The journalist, Irina Cherny had her dictaphone machine taken away, and was also beaten up. Several participants of the demonstration were hospitalized with serious injuries”. Y.Zakharov, I.Rapp, V.Yavorskiy, “Human rights in Ukraine – 2004. Human rights organizations’ report” Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (Kharkiv: Folio, 2005)

<sup>60</sup> Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>61</sup> One PORA activist noted that “when the big roads are blocked, you always have the small roads that lead to the city, and people who lived in this region helped people.” Anastasia Bezverkha. Personal interview. June 7, 2005.

<sup>62</sup> Andriy Lavryk, “The option of force,” *Halytski Kontrakty* December 6, 2004. A general consensus appears to highlight Kuchma’s lack of planning and tepid initial response to the potential protests as a key blunder made by the regime. Observers have argued that had Kuchma realized magnitude of the

Kiev police also notably did not use force to prevent opposition leaders as they began to erect the stage from which the events on the Maidan would later be dictated. Although organizers were initially stopped and fined by the Kiev police as they began to set up, they ultimately were allowed to continue.<sup>63</sup> It appears no orders were given to use force. Some have argued that this was due to Kuchma's confidence that the Orange demonstrations, like others before it, would lose steam and that his underestimation of the scale of the events was a key error. Others highlight reported collaboration between Our Ukraine leaders and Kiev Mayor Alexander Omelchenko, although the extent of this cooperation remains unclear.<sup>64</sup> Kiev police serve under two chains of command: the city government and the national MVS. Although Omelchenko had shut down a pre-election rally, declaring that "we cannot allow disorder," he appears to have been hedging his position, becoming increasingly supportive of the opposition as events progressed.<sup>65</sup>

From the first days that protestors took to the Kiev streets, discussions were already taking place between officers of the interior troops as to whether commands to use force against protestors would be followed. A senior law enforcement official recalls that:

Those within the middle levels of the security forces considered it unacceptable to use force. We all called each other – people with whom we had confidence. These commanders may not have said specifically that they would not obey illegal orders. But a lot of officers who were in a position to do something just didn't show up to work, or didn't pick up the phone.<sup>66</sup>

Another mid-level Interior Ministry officer speculated that if given the order to mobilize against the civilians at the Maidan, "in Kiev, the troops wouldn't have followed this order.

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threat posed by the "Orange Revolution," he might have called on more reliable forces than local highway police to blockade the capital.

<sup>63</sup> Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>64</sup> D'Aneiri (2006) See Strategic Objective V for a discussion of Omelchenko's decisionmaking.

<sup>65</sup> Our Ukraine coordinators have since stated that Omelchenko made his support conditional upon their ability to bring large numbers of civilians into the streets. Wilson, (2005) 125. Also cited by D'Aneiri (2006)

<sup>66</sup> Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

In my case, on that day, if the order had come, I would have magically disappeared by getting ill.”<sup>67</sup>

However, most police officers were comfortable helping maintain order and guarding key government buildings as the influx of Ukrainian citizens into the capital continued to grow. Riot police with shields were mobilized to protect the Central Election Commission building but were soon repositioned around the Presidential Administration building after protestors relocated to the Maidan. The rows closest to protestors were made up of troops from the Kiev region, who, Our Ukraine sources believe, were “drawn to the side of the people” within the first couple of days.<sup>68</sup> On the 24<sup>th</sup>, the head of the public order directorate of the Ukrainian Interior Ministry, General Oleksandr Savchenko, articulated both his reluctance to initiate violence and his willingness to retaliate, stating that the police “can only defend. If we are attacked, we won’t be passive, as was the case in 2001 when we were being beaten up [during clashes with opposition protesters.]”<sup>69</sup> The presence of both pro-opposition hotheads and pro-regime provocateurs in the crowds gave particular weight to the warning.

A number of public defections occurred on November 26<sup>th</sup>. One of the more dramatic took place when between three and six hundred cadets from the Interior Ministry Academy came to the Maidan, dressed in full uniform.<sup>70</sup> After the Our Ukraine team invited them to the stage to publicly address their officers, they made statements declaring that they no

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>69</sup> Savchenko also noted the sagaciousness of the opposition’s commitment to nonviolent tactics,, saying that he believed "in the wisdom of the youth staying in Maidan, that they will not attack us...not only because they know that we can respond, but also because they are intelligent people." “Ukrainian Police General Pledges Not To Use Force Against Protesters” *Ukrayinska Pravda*, November 24, 2004.

<sup>70</sup> *Zerkalo nedeli*, November 20-26. Cited in Taras Kuzio, Taras Kuzio, “Security Forces Begin to Defect to Victor Yushchenko.” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 1, Issue 137 December 1, 2004; “Demoralization” quote: Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

longer wished to work in the Interior Ministry “if the state will be run this way.”<sup>71</sup> Some also declared their intent to defend against a crackdown, if necessary.<sup>72</sup> Three-hundred cadets were expelled from the academy the following day.<sup>73</sup> These, as one observer pointed out “were the guys that would have been future officers.”<sup>74</sup> Also on the 26<sup>th</sup>, police from the Kiev and western Lviv regions publicly declared their support for the opposition. Some individuals even agreed to appear to express their sentiments on the Channel 5 independent television station.<sup>75</sup> That same day, Interior Minister Bilokon publicly insisted that his officers “obey the law” and not declare their support for either candidate, suggesting that his previous faith in the universal loyalty of his forces was somewhat diminished.<sup>76</sup>

Other sections of the Interior Ministry appeared less likely to exhibit loyalty shifts. Dark buses of police troops less sympathetic to the opposition had also arrived in the capital. Behind the local Interior Ministry troops stood this more formidable force. Trucked in from the Yanukovych-friendly regions of Crimea and Donetsk, these troops had orders to shoot should opposition forces attempt to storm the Presidential Administration building.<sup>77</sup> Interior Ministry special forces snipers were also allegedly stationed at various

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<sup>71</sup> Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005. Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>72</sup> “Cadets of the Academy of Internal Affairs are ready to defend Ukrainian people” Press Service of Victor Yushchenko’s Central Headquarters 11/26/05. Online at <http://razom.org.ua/en/news/4285/>

<sup>73</sup> Danylo Yanevsky, *Chronicles of the Orange Revolution* (Kiev: Folio/Channel 5, 2005) excerpts translated from Ukrainian by Inna Shyrokova.

<sup>74</sup> Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>75</sup> “Police join opposition protests over Ukraine elections” Sylvie Briand, *Agence France Presse* Nov 26

<sup>76</sup> Observation also made by Taras Kuzio in his *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, December 1, 2004. Kuzio notes that Bilokon’s demand revealed the growing problem of interior ministry defections. Quote cited by Kuzio from *Ukrayinska pravda*, November 26, 2004.

<sup>77</sup> Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005. The troops were the Crimea and the Donetsk units of OMON (Militia Special Forces Detachments) “Ukraine SBU Chief Turchynov On Orange Revolution,” *Ukrayinska Pravda*. May 20, 2005.

spots around the Maidan.<sup>78</sup> There were no indications that these troops would be unwilling to comply.

Outside the city, many more Interior Ministry troops were housed in barracks, “with no access to news, so they could have been told anything to fire them up.”<sup>79</sup> Opposition leaders charged with developing security contacts had had considerable difficulty initiating communication with these units, and so could not predict with great accuracy what they would do if given the order to crack down.<sup>80</sup> Altogether, more than 15,000 Interior Ministry troops assembled in or near Kiev over the first week of the Revolution.<sup>81</sup> These were the troops eventually mobilized on the decisive night of November 28<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Ministry of Defense***

On Wednesday November 24<sup>th</sup>, Defense Minister Kuzmuk publicly insisted that elections were conducted "in conformity with the law."<sup>82</sup> Within the Ministry of Defense, as well, the official posture was opaque: many in the Ministry were in what one insider described as a "waiting mode."<sup>83</sup> Throughout the ranks, internal discussions were ongoing as to what stance the military would take. One colonel standing with protestors on the Maidan told a reporter, "Inside the army at all levels everyone is talking about this, it is hard to know what the conclusion will be.... There are a lot of different opinions, nobody knows what the army will

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<sup>78</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005. According to Antonets, the Omega Sniper Unit of the BARS special forces brigade were active on the rooftops above the Maidan.

<sup>79</sup> Senior Western Diplomat. Personal interview, June 9 2005.

<sup>80</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>81</sup> Western diplomat. Personal interview. May 30, 2005.

<sup>82</sup> He further ambiguously urged the armed forces to "remain calm, act in a measured way, and fulfill your constitutional duty in keeping with the law." "Ukraine defense chief appeals to army to keep calm" *Agence France Presse*, November 24, 2004.

<sup>83</sup> Press secretary, Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. Personal interview. June 6, 2005.

finally decide.<sup>84</sup> Conversations appeared to have been increasingly open after the elections. As one former captain recalls, “There was very hot discussion about this – we divided into groups – some supported Yanukovic, some supported the Orange movement. It depended on the group. In mine, the Orange movement prevailed, in others, it was 50/50.”<sup>85</sup>

During that period, Kumzuk held regular meetings with his senior military staff to gauge their opinions, and would continue to do so nearly every 48 hours throughout the conflict.<sup>86</sup> He had reason to be concerned. On the Maidan, increasing numbers of officers had begun arriving after the workday, though in civilian clothes so as not to violate military regulations.<sup>87</sup> A colonel interviewed on November 25<sup>th</sup>, when hypothetically asked how the military would respond to a request by Our Ukraine for army assistance in entering the Presidential Administration building, replied: "Right now, they would not [heed the request.] The high command would never obey that order. But many of the junior officers feel differently, many of them support this protest."<sup>88</sup> Organizers reported afterwards that it was at the “middle and upper-middle” ranks of the Ukrainian armed services that a “series of informal agreements” was struck.<sup>89</sup> According to one account, “first officers agreed that they would not use force to suppress protestors under any circumstances. Second, in the event that the regime resorted to violent tactics against civilians, army units would intervene – physically if necessary - and mediate.”<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> “Army emerging as key wild card in struggle” *The Irish Times*, November 25, 2004.

<sup>85</sup> Colonel, Ukrainian Army. Telephone interview. August 8, 2008.

<sup>86</sup> General, Ukrainian Army. Personal interview. June 4, 2005.

<sup>87</sup> Press secretary, Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. Personal interview. June 6, 2005.

<sup>88</sup> “Army emerging as key wild card in struggle” *The Irish Times*, November 25, 2004.

<sup>89</sup> Taran, Sergiy “Driving factors of peace in the ‘Orange revolution’ in Ukraine” presentation notes, “Peaceful Transition: Lessons Learned from Georgia and Ukraine.” US Institute of Peace Panel, October 11, 2005.

<sup>90</sup> Taran, Sergiy “Driving factors of peace in the ‘Orange revolution’ in Ukraine” presentation notes, “Peaceful Transition: Lessons Learned from Georgia and Ukraine.” US Institute of Peace Panel, October 11, 2005..

Some in western Ukraine began publicly renouncing the regime. On November 25<sup>th</sup>, General Mykhaylo Kutsyn, head of the Ukrainian Western Operational Command (WOC) officially declared that the WOC would “not fight against their own people.”<sup>91</sup> Sources close to the officer corps in Lviv recall the tension and “silence” between the initial statement by Kutsyn and the Ministry of Defense statement of its position.<sup>92</sup> On Friday, November 26, Kuzmuk declared that “criminal orders will not be given to the troops” and requested that “no one appeal to officers to take one side or the other. They can be on no side but that of the Ukrainian people, which we will never betray.”<sup>93</sup> Army Chief of Staff General Mykola Petruk would ultimately play a pivotal role in putting the breaks on a potential Interior Ministry actions on the night of November 28<sup>th</sup>.

### ***State Security***

Some accounts of the Orange Revolution have emphasized the role of the SBU in avoiding bloodshed.<sup>94</sup> While observers have since argued that such initial reports exaggerated the contributions of the SBU, it does appear that a significant number of mid-ranking officers took individual initiatives to contribute to a bloodless resolution of the conflict.<sup>95</sup> In November, former deputy SBU head Alexander Sharkov publicly offered his assessment that the regime could “count on a hardcore of loyalists in the SBU, the armed forces and the Interior Ministry, who are unscrupulous” but that “the majority of officers

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<sup>91</sup> “Ukrainian General Says Army will not Fight the People” *Interfax-Ukraine News Agency*, November 24, 2004.

<sup>92</sup> Spokesman, Army of Ukraine, Western Operational Command (former). Personal interview, August 14, 2008.

<sup>93</sup> “Ukraine defense minister appeals for army neutrality amid protests” *Agence France Presse*, June 25, 2004..

<sup>94</sup> CJ Chivers, “How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation’s Path” *The New York Times*, 1/17/05

<sup>95</sup> Taras Kuzio “Did Ukraine’s Security Service Really Prevent Bloodshed During the Orange Revolution?”

*Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 2 Issue 16 (January 24, 2005); Western diplomat. Personal interview. May 30, 2005.

and, at least in the SBU, the leadership, will reject the use of force."<sup>96</sup> One senior law enforcement official interviewed later described the largely *ad hoc* nature of cooperation between the SBU and challengers on the Maidan:

I am sure that the military intelligence and SBU did not receive orders to work with the opposition. I know that there were those within the forces who acted on their own to prevent bloodshed from the very first day of the confrontation. Those people were at all the hottest points, 24 hours a day. Often they were working in parallel with ...official people from the Yushchenko team who were responsible for local organization.<sup>97</sup>

Information was also being leaked to the opposition. Over the course of the campaign, opposition leaders and mid-ranking SBU operatives had cultivated unofficial lines of communication that proved particularly relevant as the Orange Revolution approached. During that time, Our Ukraine's chief of staff Oleg Rybachuk met regularly with several SBU contacts who provided him with internal documents from Yanukovych's offices.<sup>98</sup> Some of the documents indicated the regime's intent to engage in election fraud, which Rybachuk later used in Our Ukraine campaign materials.<sup>99</sup> In late October, to the chagrin of the SBU leadership, campaign chief Oleksandr Zinchenko publicly thanked the "middle-level segment" of the SBU for its assistance to the Our Ukraine bloc.<sup>100</sup> Some public renunciation of the regime even began to take place: Smeshko advisor Alexander Skipalsky

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<sup>96</sup> Sylvie Briand "Police join opposition protests over Ukraine elections," *Agence France Press*, November 26, 2004.

<sup>97</sup> Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005. (Speaking in capacity as private citizen.).

<sup>98</sup> CJ Chivers, "How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation's Path" The New York Times, January 17, 2005. SBU officials reportedly met particularly often with campaign chief Oleksandr Zinchenko . See also Taras Kuzio "Did Ukraine's Security Service Really Prevent Bloodshed During the Orange Revolution?" *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 2 Issue 16 (January 24, 2005).

<sup>99</sup> See also "Did Ukraine's Security Service Really Prevent Bloodshed During the Orange Revolution? Taras Kuzio, *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 2 Issue 16, January 14, 2005.

<sup>100</sup> "Ukrainian Security Service Avoids Role in Political Struggle: interview with Oleksandr Skipalski," *Ukrajina Moloda*, November 30, 2004.

publicly aired concerns about the nature of the regime and doubts about his loyalties in an early November interview with *Ukrayna Moloda*.<sup>101</sup>

However, there were also some within the SBU who would continue to actively oppose the opposition until it appeared imprudent to continue. According to a source within the Our Ukraine, for most of the beginning in 2002, they “experienced a situation where everyone, including the SBU, was against us.”<sup>102</sup> In October 2004, plainclothes SBU agents ransacked several election-oriented NGO offices and personal residences, confiscating documents including records of voter lists and campaign finance sources.<sup>103</sup> An observer familiar with the institution described the dynamics:

The reality was that the security services of Ukraine were split into three parts. One was pro-Yanukovych. A second part of the SBU was trying to share information with the opposition, while the third part was idle. The fact that the SBU was not united was another advantage for the revolution.<sup>104</sup>

A former SBU officer who joined the opposition during the 1990s but retained friendships with individuals in the agency made a similar point: “the SBU was not unanimous. Many departments were actively working against Yushchenko, inciting provocations, etc. The SBU was not ‘with the people.’”<sup>105</sup> According to Yushchenko, his infamous dioxin poisoning likely took place at the house of General Smeshko's First Deputy, Volodymyr Satsyuk, where Yushchenko, General Smeshko, Satsyuk and others met late one night in early September.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Officer, SBU (former). Personal interview. June 2, 2005.

<sup>103</sup> “Ukraine: Ransacking of Youth Groups' Offices Detailed.” *Ukrajinska Pravda*, October 23, 2004.

<sup>104</sup> Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>105</sup> Officer, SBU (former). Personal interview. August 5, 2008.

<sup>106</sup> Yuri Zarakhovich “Guess Who Came to Dinner?” *Time*, December 19, 2004.

The position of SBU was thus ambiguous. Others have similarly argued that the decisions made by the security service leadership were contingent upon the likelihood of success, arguing that: “SBU officers cooperated with both camps because they wanted to be on good terms with whoever won.”<sup>107</sup> Yulia Tymoshenko later commented that “this was a very complicated game,” and felt that SBU officials, including General Smeshko, “merely hedged their bets,” in the words of the *New York Times* reporter who interviewed her.<sup>108</sup>

At the head of the institution, Smeshko remains a controversial figure in the history of the Orange Revolution. The early September meeting was held to discuss, in the words of Smeshko, “the SBU's participation or nonparticipation in the presidential elections.”<sup>109</sup> When Yushchenko met with Smeshko on November 24<sup>th</sup> to request personal security, the SBU chief assigned him eight specialists from the elite “Alpha” counterterrorism unit, and reportedly agreed to contact former SBU agents to help guard members of the campaign.<sup>110</sup> He insisted, however, that the SBU must officially maintain its neutral stance as to the outcome of the political process.<sup>111</sup> SBU agents would remain in the Maidan throughout the protests to monitor events, communicate with actors on the ground and – potentially – attempt to defend against an attack.<sup>112</sup>

Some potential for “counterbalancing” to protect civilians from Interior Ministry attacks also existed from early in the demonstrations. Reports have emerged of unofficial assistance from individual SBU and police officers during the first two days of the demonstrations. As

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<sup>107</sup> News journalist, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 2, 2005.

<sup>108</sup> How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation's Path” CJ Chivers, *The New York Times*, January 17, 2005.

<sup>109</sup> Volodymyr Boyko, “Secrets of the ‘last supper’” *Ukrayinska Pravda*, October 2, 2004.

<sup>110</sup> How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation's Path” CJ Chivers, *The New York Times*, January 17, 2005.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. Andrew Wilson (2005) 135.

crowds mounted beyond the Our Ukraine and Pora's initial capacity for security guards, a self-appointed group of twelve sympathetic individuals from the SBU, police and military patrolled the crowds in plainclothes, "ready to act as a buffer as necessary in hot spots."<sup>113</sup> There were purportedly a number of such groups present in the Maidan area, each "under its own vision, with its own understanding of the situation." According to a close observer of one such group, coordination between the groups or with the official Our Ukraine headquarters was minimal.<sup>114</sup> To one Our Ukraine insider, who communicated with SBU agents regarding public order on the Maidan, the institution's support was not taken for granted and came as a relief. He later reported that "as for SBU - their people worked around Maidan – they knew the situation, and they could make their own decisions. At the most difficult period, we got the information that they would be on the side of Maidan."<sup>115</sup>

### ***The Night of November 28<sup>th</sup>***

On November 27, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, a body that included the leadership of the Ministry of Defense, Interior Ministry, and SBU and other political power-players, came together to decide whether a "state of emergency" existed and whether martial law should be declared. According to sources present at the time, Minister of Defense Alexander Kuzmuk and security services chief General Igor Smeshko opposed both the decisions, while Interior Minister Mykola Bilokon and Yanukovych, who was also present, argued in favor.<sup>116</sup> In fact, interviews later revealed that Yanukovych allegedly began insisting that Kuchma declare martial law, to "establish

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<sup>113</sup> Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>115</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>116</sup> News journalist, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 2, 2005; General Igor Smeshko. Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

order” and blamed Kuchma for “not doing his job.”<sup>117</sup> At one point, General Smeshko reportedly commented that Yanukovych should give the written order and sign it himself, if he was so insistent. Apparently, Yanukovych remained silent, and Smeshko is said to have continued: “your answer is clear.”<sup>118</sup> Kuchma continued to decline to declare martial law.<sup>119</sup> That evening, General Smeshko went on national television to officially announce that the government opposed the use of force to resolve political conflict.<sup>120</sup>

The most dangerous moment for challengers, by most accounts, occurred the following night, on Sunday, November 28th. At around 10 pm, about 10,000 interior troops were reportedly mobilized, many of whom were issued tear gas and live ammunition.<sup>121</sup> Events developed rapidly: as one counterintelligence official later put it, “there are four stages of fighting alert – permanent, heightened, military and full. Popkov jumped over three and introduced the fourth, full alert. Ammunition can be distributed only at the full alert.”<sup>122</sup>

The origins of the order are still unknown. Many believe that Victor Medvedchuk, Kuchma’s chief of staff, initiated the order.<sup>123</sup> Igor Smeshko, SBU head, argues that troops were mobilized as a warning in response to fears by Interior Minister Bilokon that Orange protestors would storm the Presidential Administration building.<sup>124</sup> (General Popkov and Medvedchuk later claimed that there was no order and that the troop movements were “just

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<sup>117</sup> CJ Chivers, How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation's Path” *The New York Times*. January 17, 2005. Senior Western Diplomat. Personal interview, June 9 2005.

<sup>118</sup> Senior Western Diplomat. Personal interview, June 9 2005.

<sup>119</sup> News journalist, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 2, 2005; Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>120</sup> General Igor Smeshko. Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>121</sup> CJ Chivers, “How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation's Path” *The New York Times*. January 17, 2005.

<sup>122</sup> Alexander Galaka. Interview with “Segodnya”. November 19, 2005.

<sup>123</sup> See CJ Chivers, How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation's Path” *The New York Times*; Taras Kuzio “Did Ukraine’s Security Services Really Prevent Bloodshed during the Orange Revolution?” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 2 Issue 16 1/24/05.

<sup>124</sup> General Igor Smeshko. Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

a drill".<sup>125</sup>) However, according to Our Ukraine leaders, sources within the ranks of the interior troops informed them that they were mobilized in earnest on the night of the 28<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>126</sup> A senior military official at meetings prior to the 28<sup>th</sup> also acknowledges that some in the security forces had raised proposals for a nighttime "mopping up" operation.<sup>127</sup>

As alarms in interior troops barracks signaled a mobilization, Our Ukraine leaders received phone calls from their contacts within the units assembled outside Kiev.<sup>128</sup> "As we received the news, the troops were right in the middle of boarding trucks... their engines were running," recalled Our Ukraine insider Borys Tarasyuk.<sup>129</sup> The troops never reached their destination.

For those Ukrainian Interior Ministry troops who did receive the order to mobilize, rapid decisions often had to be made. As had been the case in Serbia, many mid-ranking officers were unwilling to move their units. In one anecdotal data point, Our Ukraine coordinator Taras Stetskiv recounted a conversation he had with a former classmate who at that time was a captain in one of the Interior Ministry units stationed outside Kiev:

He called me at night to tell me that arms were distributed to every third soldier in their unit...and he told me that I could be sure that his unit would never even leave their location. You can imagine that his mobile was bugged, but he was brave enough to call me. This reflects the moods of the military, and why they did not get the order to shoot."<sup>130</sup>

While some within the ranks of the thousands of interior troops grouped outside Kiev could well have carried out orders to march on the Maidan, others sent increasingly open

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<sup>125</sup> Victor Medvedchuk: I have made my choice and I am ready for anything" Ukraynska Pravda; Taras Kuzio, *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 2 Issue 16 (January 24, 2005) Did Ukraine's Security Services Really Prevent Bloodshed during the Orange Revolution?

<sup>126</sup> Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>127</sup> Lt General Nicolay Melnik, address at Harvard Black Sea Security Program, April 2005.

<sup>128</sup> "The Stealthy Role of Military Informers in Ukraine Revolution." *Agent France Presse*, February 15, 2005.

<sup>129</sup> Konrad Schuller "The Command was not Obeyed" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 20, 2004.

[translated by Nykolai Bilaniuk, online at [http://statti.blogspot.com/2004\\_12\\_01\\_statti\\_archive.html](http://statti.blogspot.com/2004_12_01_statti_archive.html).]

<sup>130</sup> Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

messages about their about their unwillingness to act.<sup>131</sup> In addition to his former classmate's call, Stetskiv recalls numerous cases in which movement organizers "got phone calls from officers who had received orders to mobilize but they would refuse. They would not fulfill these orders. In some cases, the [interior ministry troops] did not even leave their posts."<sup>132</sup> When they did move, they didn't get far – in Bilotsekva [outside of Kiev], for example, units "left their bases, but the people just stood in the street and did not allow them to go, and the troops didn't even attempt to get through the groups of people."<sup>133</sup>

During the next three hours, the Interior Ministry was bombarded with telephone calls. The Our Ukraine headquarters informed the Ministry leadership of their isolated position, warning: "you only have the Internal Troops. Neither the army nor the SBU will be on your side."<sup>134</sup> Our Ukraine also quickly called the US Embassy to inform them of the events.<sup>135</sup>

There were also calls made between services. Military counterintelligence head Maj. Gen. Vitaly Romanchenko called General Popkov, who was mobilizing the internal troops, to warn him "that his steps would be immediately recorded, and that if he used force, he would be prosecuted."<sup>136</sup> General Galaka, the head of military counterintelligence, also called Popkov with the same message.<sup>137</sup> He also called Deputy of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army Sergi Kirichenko to say "they are giving out arms. And he quietly says: so what? And again says this phrase – let God help you. But at this time, there was Petruk

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<sup>131</sup> Those of most concern to Orange organizers and to western diplomats were the divisions from Crimea, who were largely secluded from external communication. Western diplomat, Personal interview. June 3, 2005.

<sup>132</sup> Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Our Ukraine parliamentarian. Personal interview. June 7, 2005. News journalist, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 2, 2005.

<sup>135</sup> "How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation's Path" CJ Chivers, *The New York Times*. January 17, 2005.

<sup>136</sup> General Igor Smeshko. Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. Galaka also recalls that he and others "found Alexander Kihtenko (then first deputy commander – head of HQ of interior troops) and Kihtenko went to Popkov asking for a written order. They had a personal conversation then." Alexander Galaka, head of the Main Intelligence Department of the Defense Ministry. Interview with "Segodnya". November 19, 2005.

there and others. It was already something.”<sup>138</sup> According to Our Ukraine sources, Smeshko also made calls to the general prosecutor, the interior minister, and the head of Kiev police urging them to call off the troops.<sup>139</sup> There are unverified reports that Alpha special forces troops were armed and prepared to meet MVS forces as they marched into Kiev.<sup>140</sup>

The most significant stand in support of the unarmed civilians at the Maidan appears to have come from the chief of staff of the army, General Mykola Petruk. Subsequent reports of a conversation between Petruk and Popkov indicate that Petruk threatened at one point to place unarmed Ukrainian soldiers between the Interior Ministry troops and protestors should the threat of a crackdown materialize.<sup>141</sup> A senior Western diplomat remembers that after the flurry of calls, he “went to bed thinking that we had made the difference. But in the morning I heard about the call that had been made from the head of the army. The call from the army was the more critical element.”<sup>142</sup>

### **Assessment of Strategic Objectives**

Each of the strategic objectives proposed in Chapter One ultimately proved relevant in influencing security force loyalty during the Orange Revolution. Considerations of relative legitimacy – cultivated through vigorous campaigning and outreach by challengers – played an important role in inspiring some loyalty shifts, despite the potential risks

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<sup>138</sup> Petruk had met with Galaka, and Melnik earlier that day and confirmed that the armed forces would not take part in actions against civilians. Alexander Galaka. Interview with “Segodnya”. November 19, 2005

<sup>139</sup> “The Stealthy Role of Military Informers in Ukraine Revolution.” *Agent France Presse*, February 15, 2005.

<sup>140</sup> Channel Five journalist, interview with author, 6/8/05

<sup>141</sup> For details on the call from Petruk, see “Tarasyuk and Turchynov on the Orange Revolution” *Ukrayinkska Pravda* 4/20/05; “Oleksandr Turchynov: The Order To Crush the Revolution Was Given as Coming Directly from Kuchma. But the Ground Troops Were Prepared To Take the Side of the People” *Ukrayinkska Pravda*, 5/20/05. On the call from Our Ukraine, see also “How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation's Path” CJ Chivers, *The New York Times*. January 17, 2005.

<sup>142</sup> Senior Western Diplomat. Personal interview, June 9, 2005.

involved in defection. Explicit steps taken by challengers to reduce the frictions and costs involved in demonstrating loyalty shifts helped to facilitate decision-making. While others within the security forces may have been less convinced of – or interested in – the illegitimacy of the regime or legitimacy of challengers, the actions of their colleagues did influence their assessment of the regime’s likelihood of success. Once the Orange Revolution was fully underway, the significant costs involved in engaging in repression against the crowds on the Maidan helped to deter key decision-makers from issuing clear orders through traditional chains of command, reducing the costs of disobedience. As events unfolded, challengers took active steps to bolster security force perceptions of their own strength and exacerbate cleavages within and between the security institutions.

### ***Strategic Objective I: Expose Regime Illegitimacy***

Disgust with regime illegitimacy appears to have been a significant factor in determining decisions made by some members of the security forces, particularly early defectors. Unlike the Serbian case, there was no recent history of battlefield losses to wield against the regime. However, many within Ukraine’s military, police, and intelligence services were uneasy with the fact that would-be Kuchma successor Victor Yanukovych had a criminal record. This served as a vulnerability to which challengers frequently alluded.<sup>143</sup> Additionally, clear evidence of election fraud was leveraged to tap into a more general disgust with the lawlessness of the oligarchic power structure, embodied, challengers argued, by Yanukovych. One senior Western diplomat in close touch with the military and intelligence services throughout the struggle emphasizes the importance of the

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<sup>143</sup> Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005; How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation’s Path” CJ Chivers, *The New York Times*, January 17, 2005. Yanukovych had previously served three and a half years in jail on assault and robbery convictions.

fact that “this was a government that was crumbling – it didn’t have legitimacy in the eyes of its people.”<sup>144</sup>

Conviction prompted some officers to take riskier positions early in the standoff by publicly renouncing the regime – even before opposition success appeared inevitable. By early November, the SBU’s General Skipalsky was willing to speak publicly about his reluctance to uphold Kuchma policies, stating in a newspaper interview that “many of my colleagues nowadays want the same thing: to serve the Ukrainian people, but not to fulfill unlawful directives of oligarchs linked to the authorities.”<sup>145</sup> Other public defectors similarly felt principles compelled them to renounce the position of the regime, despite potential costs. General Kutsyn of the army’s Western Operational Command, reportedly encouraged by an idealistic young press secretary, made his views on regime illegitimacy known well before the official position came in from Kiev.<sup>146</sup> As early as November 21<sup>st</sup> – the night of the second round – interior ministry officers appeared on television stating their unwillingness to engage in repression.<sup>147</sup> Those police and military officers who took the risk of publicly declaring their opinions about the elections on Channel 5 were, as one journalist recalled “nervous and a bit scared. But I could see in their eyes that they were happy about doing this. They always referred to Christian values. They said: ‘we will be held accountable before God.’”<sup>148</sup> It was as though many within the security forces, as the journalist recalled, simply “felt their consciences wake up.”<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Western diplomat. Personal interview. July 22, 2008.

<sup>145</sup> “Ukrainian Security Service Avoids Role in Political Struggle: interview with Oleksandr Skipalski,” *Ukrayina Moloda*, November 3, 2004.

<sup>146</sup> Spokesman, Army of Ukraine, Western Operational Command (former). Personal interview, August 14, 2008.

<sup>147</sup> Taras Kuzio, “Security Forces Begin to Defect to Victor Yushchenko,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 1, Issue 137 December 1, 2004.

<sup>148</sup> Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

The choice of a Kuchma successor with a criminal record had not strengthened the regime's case. Yanukovych had previously served three and a half years in jail on assault and robbery convictions. When Yanukovic went on one of his campaign trips [in October], a TV anchor spoke with one captain on Kuchma's security crew confidentially. According to the TV anchor, the captain said, "Listen to me, my friends. How is it possible that, before, we guarded this candidate [as a prisoner] and now we are his security. What a difference! How can this happen?"<sup>150</sup> Senior military officers similarly considered the regime to be riddled with "bandits" and "criminals."<sup>151</sup>

Our Ukraine successfully exploited this vulnerability. In speeches at rallies leading up the Orange Revolution Yushchenko explicitly referenced a colloquial term for "bandits," pledging that with an Orange victory "bandits would be in prison" and would no longer be allowed make the laws.<sup>152</sup> His word choice – prison slang – offered a clear reference to Yanukovic's time in jail.<sup>153</sup> In his first address as candidate in July 2004, Yushchenko similarly made negative references to "*poniatia*" or informal prison rules, stating instead that "I want to live according to the law."<sup>154</sup> In Lviv, Our Ukraine campaign organizers particularly focused on Yanukovic's multiple arrests prior to the elections, aware that "this could influence military and police voters."<sup>155</sup>

Yushchenko also directly addressed Ukraine's security forces. While he had previously focused on such traditional campaign issues for military voters such as pensions, pay levels,

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Lt General Nicolay Melnik, address at Harvard Black Sea Security Program, April 2005.

<sup>152</sup> Ioulia Shukan, "The Orange Revolution: Reflections About a Successful Strategy of Collective Action" Paper presented at Association for the Study of Nationalities, 2007 World Convention, April 2007. 22.

<sup>153</sup> Shukan writes: "o give credit to the representation of immorality of the regime, the latter is labeled as "zone", in other words "prison universe"; to point out to the absence of moral rightness among the power holders, the latter are stigmatized as "bandits" or "zeks" (prisoners of the common law)." Shukan (2007).22

<sup>154</sup> Shukan (2007), 22 cites Ukrainska Pravda, July 4, 2004.

<sup>155</sup> Our Ukraine organizer (Lviv, Ukraine). Personal interview. August 13, 2008.

and corruption throughout the campaign, he began to directly address the issue of legitimacy and disobedience as the question of a crackdown became increasingly salient.<sup>156</sup> On the Maidan, appealing “to the leaders of the army and the security structure, but also to the soldiers and militiamen themselves,” the Our Ukraine head underscored that the elections frauds were crimes on the part of the authorities “who want to maintain a regime of lawlessness, corruption, and abuse of human rights.” He went on to ask the uniformed services to “stand up for the defense of the country” and declared that regime “criminals want to send you to the barricades. There won’t be found there the sons of those who are pushing you into bloodshed. They’re running away. But we’re staying with you, we’re building a new Ukraine.”<sup>157</sup> By highlighting the corruption and crime that characterized both Kuchma’s tenure in office and Yanukovych’s personal history, Yushchenko was able to tap into a growing resentment within the security forces about the nature of the regime that they were being asked to serve.

Within this context, the elections presented a potential precipitant to crisis. During the second round, international observers cited reports that Interior Ministry employees across Ukraine had been pressured to apply for absentee ballots and relinquish these ballots to the ministry.<sup>158</sup> One Interior Ministry officer also recalled that he was told by his superiors that “we can see who you will vote for, so we strongly recommend that you vote for the right guy.’ There were actual orders to vote for Yanukovych.”<sup>159</sup> At the polls, on journalist recalls that “there were two *milizia* men on each side of the poll. One colonel

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<sup>156</sup> Kiev-based interior ministry officer, interview with author, 6/12/05; Colonel, Euro-Atlantic Integration Department, Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. Personal interview. June 9, 2005. “Yushchenko Vows To Rid Ukraine Police of Corruption if Elected” *Moscow ITAR-TASS* November 5, 2004.

<sup>157</sup> “Yushchenko calls on soldiers and militia to defend Ukrainian people” *Korrespondent.net* November 24, 2004.

<sup>158</sup> International Election Observation Mission, “Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions: Presidential Election (Second Round)” Kiev, November 2004.

<sup>159</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

shook my hand and said – don't think that everyone from the *milizia* support the government. If I see anything I will let you know.”<sup>160</sup>

Concrete evidence of election fraud, particularly during the second round of the election, provided potent fodder for challengers exposing regime illegitimacy. Much has been written about significance of exposing election fraud during the Orange Revolution.<sup>161</sup> As had been the case in Serbia, work done by independent electoral monitoring groups to expose fraud laid bare the illegitimacy of the regime.<sup>162</sup> In particular, Committee of Ukrainian Voters (CVU) and other NGOs played a critical role in monitoring and providing parallel vote tabulation in both rounds, offering both quantitative and anecdotal evidence of fraud.<sup>163</sup> International organizations such as the OSCE reinforced the assessments of domestic monitors.

Election fraud pervaded discussion of regime legitimacy after the second round. On November 25, General Skipalksy appeared on-stage with Mr. Yushchenko and told demonstrators that he shared their "well-founded doubts" about the election.<sup>164</sup> He continued:

The only source of power in Ukraine - the Ukrainian people - has not recognized the result of the presidential election as legitimate...we appeal to the judges of the Supreme Court: Be impartial, do your duty and prove that

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<sup>160</sup> Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>161</sup> See McFaul (2006); Joshua Tucker “Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Colored Revolutions,” *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(3): 537-553

<sup>162</sup> McFaul (2006) 175.

<sup>163</sup> McFaul (2006) 175. McFaul notes that exposing fraud was particularly difficult given the relatively sophisticated manipulation techniques employed by the regime. ‘Hundreds and hundreds’ of qualitative accounts of irregular procedures thus proved important. Citing State Department reports, Josh Tucker highlights the “illegal expulsion of opposition representatives from election commissions, multiple voting by busloads of people, absentee ballot abuse, and an extraordinary high number of mobile ballot box votes” as examples. Tucker (2005) 9

<sup>164</sup> “Election Crisis Week 1:21-27 November 2004” GlobalSecurity.org  
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ukraine/election-2004-1.htm>

law is respected in Ukraine. We appeal to law enforcement officers ... to avoid any actions that would put you against the people.<sup>165</sup>

General Skibinetskyi also called on law-enforcement bodies, investigators, prosecutors, special forces and other militaries to show solidarity with the crowds, saying, “we appeal to you to avoid any actions which would put you in confrontation with those people who entrusted you to protect them.”<sup>166</sup> When asked why Skibinetskyi and Skipalsky were willing to go out on a limb as early as they did, one former colleague who had joined the opposition but maintained relationships in the SBU said that, unlike previous protests, the electoral fraud was something that affected them directly. “They hadn’t seen [politics] as their business and didn’t want to be actively involved. But in 2004, they saw Kuchma go too far. Criminals of Donetsk were openly falsifying the elections – this time they saw the threat personally,” he said.<sup>167</sup>

The crisis in legitimacy prompted dissatisfaction, and sometimes-overt loyalty shifts, from others as well.<sup>168</sup> Officers of a military unit within Ministry of Emergencies publicly recognized Yushchenko as the President of Ukraine after the second round, calling on the leadership of the Ministry of Emergencies, SBU and the Ministry of Interior “to support the will of our people to elect Viktor Andriyovych Yushchenko as the President of Ukraine and to defend the constitutional rights of the Ukrainian citizens if needed”<sup>169</sup> The 300 cadets who renounced their commitment to the Interior Ministry were seen arguing with Berkut officers near the Presidential

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<sup>165</sup> Cited in Oksana Yablokova “Kiev’s Boys in Blue Are Turning Orange” *Moscow Times*, 11/30/04; see also Taras Kuzio, Security Forces Begin to Defect to Victor Yushchenko” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 1, Issue 137 12/1/04. (cites *Ukrayinska pravda*, November 25).

<sup>166</sup> Danylo Yanevsky, *Chronicles of the Orange Revolution* (Kiev: Folio/Channel 5, 2005) excerpts translated from Ukrainian by Inna Shyrokova.

<sup>167</sup> Officer, SBU (former). Personal interview. August 5, 2008.

<sup>168</sup> One police officer in Kiev’s organized crime unit recalls that, he and his colleagues “were very dissatisfied with the results of the second round, and understood that in this country things were still done the old way...without taking the opinion of society into consideration.” Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>169</sup> Danylo Yanevsky, *Chronicles of the Orange Revolution* (Kiev: Folio/Channel 5, 2005) excerpts translated from Ukrainian by Inna Shyrokova.

Administration building. They emphasized the fraudulent elections, reportedly encouraging the officers to support Yushchenko as president.<sup>170</sup>

According to interviewees, the perception that orders to repress civilians were illegitimate played an important role in restraining mid-level officers within the military and Interior Ministry.<sup>171</sup> This dynamic was further magnified by the fact that there was never official command from Kuchma, the incumbent president, technically rendering orders issued by others in his camp to use force on demonstrators illegal.<sup>172</sup> Even had he directly issued a written order to use force against the civilian protestors, some argued that it would have been illegal under the Ukrainian constitution.<sup>173</sup>

Challengers rhetorically capitalized on this perception. Maidan speakers repeatedly alluded to the concept of “illegal orders,” which became a pervasive opposition theme. Former defense minister Yevhen Marchuk publicly appealed to security forces on the Fifth Channel:

It is worth reminding you that the law on the fundamental principles of national security says that before deciding to use force, a government must weigh its force compared to the object it plans to use force against. To put it simply, you

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<sup>170</sup> *Zerkalo nedeli*, November 20-26. Cited in Taras Kuzio “Security Forces Begin to Defect to Victor Yushchenko,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 1, Issue 137, December 1, 2004.

<sup>171</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005. This opinion was also particularly prevalent in the military. General, Ukrainian Army, Personal interview. June 14, 2004.

<sup>172</sup> Article 106 of the Ukrainian Constitution delineates a “decision in accordance with the law on the general or partial mobilization and the introduction of martial law in Ukraine or in its particular areas” as the responsibility of the president. Yanukovych could potentially have made the case for presidential authority, but was unwilling to take the political risk.

<sup>173</sup> A visitor to the Interior Ministry academy recalls one anecdotal example during a lecture when the discussion turned to the issue of a crackdown. One student commented during the lecture that “if we had received orders to shoot, it would have been legal.” The professor, an interior ministry colonel, responded: “our role is to protect government installations, not to take action against the people of Ukraine.” Western diplomat. Personal interview. May 30, 2005. Indeed, Article 17 of the Ukrainian Constitution states that “The Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military formations shall not be used by anyone to restrict the rights and freedoms of citizens or with the intent to overthrow the constitutional order, subvert the bodies of power or obstruct their activity.”

cannot use force against a peaceful population. If using other means, you must ask yourselves whether this could lead to panic and casualties.<sup>174</sup>

Within the Interior Ministry, evidence of election fraud diminished the authority of Kuchma and Yanukovych by raising doubts about the legitimacy of their chains of command. By the third day of protests, officers at various levels of the interior ministry hierarchy acknowledged that they were "not certain who is in charge."<sup>175</sup> One Berkut officer guarding the presidential administration reportedly said to a journalist, "I don't know whether Kuchma or Yushchenko is now president."<sup>176</sup>

For high-ranking officers within Ukrainian armed forces, at least, Yanukovic's embrace of Russia and rejection of the West may have played an additional role in forming their leadership preferences. Many recognized the value of NATO training and military-to-military ties, adesired continued western integration and support, and saw the West as the only viable model for Ukraine's development.<sup>177</sup> In the Interior Ministry on the other hand, there was a strong pro-Russia – and pro-regime – bias from the leadership. Interior Minister Mykola Bilokon, and commander of the interior troops Sergei Popkov were both from the southern Crimea region and favored closer ties with Russia.<sup>178</sup>

Further down the ranks, perceptions of regime legitimacy varied more closely along regional affiliations. Among civilian populations, the ideological splits along regional

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<sup>174</sup> "Marchuk: Ukraine's Ex-Defense Minister Warns Army, President" *BBC Monitoring International Reports* 11/26/04. Marchuck had been replaced by Kuzmuk, who was considered more loyal to Kuchma,in late September. See Taras Kuzio, "Falsification of Elections Already Underway in Ukraine." *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 1, Issue 93, September 27, 2004.

<sup>175</sup> Roman Olearchyk "Who's the president of Ukraine? Militiamen don't know." *Kiev Post*, November 24 2004.

<sup>176</sup> Taras Kuzio "Security Forces Begin to Defect to Victor Yushchenko," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 1, Issue 137 12/01/04. (Kuzio cites the *Kyiv Post*, November 25 2004).

<sup>177</sup> Western diplomat. Personal interview. May 30, 2005. At this point it is difficult to assess the degree to which each of these factors impacted decision-making within the security forces. Additional research in this area should be undertaken in order to best understand the conditions under which servicemen evaluated the situation.

<sup>178</sup> Western diplomat, Personal interview. June 3, 2005.

affiliations were made clear by vote tallies in the final round of elections: in the north and west 63.6 percent of the population voted for Yushchenko and 14.6 percent for Yanukovych.<sup>179</sup> In the south and west, preferences were reversed with 58.1 percent voting for Yanukovych and 12.2 percent for Yushchenko.<sup>180</sup> These preferences were also reflected in the leanings of those in uniform, particularly those below the top ranks – as one Interior Ministry officer pointed out, the opinions of low and mid-ranking soldiers and policemen are largely “mirrors of society.”<sup>181</sup> (Military officers recall the same phenomenon within the lower ranks of armed forces as well, ideological splits ran across regional lines.)<sup>182</sup> In the midst of the crisis, Kiev Interior Ministry officers openly acknowledged to international news sources that most police in the region believed that Yushchenko should be president.<sup>183</sup> Officers in eastern Ukraine, on the other hand, like most civilians from that region, continued to support Yanukovych and were believed to be more likely to follow potentially repressive orders.<sup>184</sup> Foreign diplomats note that it was Interior Ministry units from the eastern areas of Ukraine that they were most concerned about.<sup>185</sup>

## **Strategic Objective II: Establish Challenger Legitimacy**

The Orange movement was also successful because it was able to break through communication barriers and perception biases within the security forces to demonstrate its

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<sup>179</sup> Data from December 26<sup>th</sup> elections. Cited by Valeriy Khmelko and Svitlana Oksamytyna “Regional differences and social composition of electorates in 2004 Ukrainian Presidential Elections.” Presentation before the Petro Jacyk Program for the Study of Ukraine, University of Toronto. September 28, 2005

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>181</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>182</sup> General, Ukrainian Army. Personal interview. June 4, 2005.

<sup>183</sup> Taras Kuzio, “Security Forces Begin to Defect to Victor Yushchenko,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 1, Issue 137 December 1, 2004; BBC World News (November 28)

<sup>184</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>185</sup> David Black, “The Tipping Point in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution”. unpublished masters thesis, Syracuse University, Maxwell School, 2005

own legitimacy. Several factors appear relevant. First, the political opposition and civil society united around an individual who had both personal credibility and broad popularity. Second, challengers made concerted efforts to reach out to the communities of security forces through friends, families, and former colleagues. Third, organizers made the strategic decision to develop and leverage potential sympathies within the Kiev region, and to use Kiev as the location for their final stand-off. Finally, challengers successfully diffused negative regime propaganda through clear messaging, principled decisionmaking, and avoidance of aggressive behavior.

Part of challenger legitimacy was based on the popularity and credibility of the candidate himself. Face ravaged by the September poisoning attempt, Victor Yushchenko was both personally popular and able to project democratic ideals that transcended his individual candidacy. Throughout 2004, Yushchenko's popularity was reflected in polling data and in the large crowds he was able to draw at public rallies.<sup>186</sup> His popularity also extended within the security forces, particularly within the west. Within the intelligence community, according to one source, as many as 80% of officers enrolled in the Kiev-based SBU Academy voted for Yushchenko.<sup>187</sup> One military officer later felt that his colleagues from Western Ukraine felt positively about Yushchenko as a candidate based on his previous tenure as Prime Minister, recalling that they “knew him and his policies.”<sup>188</sup>

In his Maidan orations Yushchenko spoke directly to the Ukrainian security forces, appealing to their “honesty and professionalism” and clearly including them in his vision

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<sup>186</sup> Karatnycky, in *Revolution in Orange* 40

<sup>187</sup> Taras Kuzio “Did Ukraine’s Security Service Really Prevent Bloodshed During the Orange Revolution?”, *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Issue 16 1/24/05. (cites Zerkalo nedeli, November 20-26, 2004).

<sup>188</sup> Colonel, Ukrainian Armed Forces. Phone interview, 8/7/08

for a “new Ukraine.”<sup>189</sup> By framing their campaign in universal terms, Our Ukraine was able to convince many traditionally skeptical actors of their cause. As SBU leader Igor Smesko has put it, the distinction was clear: Ukraine’s security forces “simply had a choice between two options and we chose the best option in the circumstances.”<sup>190</sup>

Throughout the campaign challengers had worked carefully to persuade members of the security forces of the legitimacy of their cause. Recognizing the difficulties of conveying information in a restricted media environment, Our Ukraine had particularly reached out to police and military families during the 2004 presidential campaign. Because official meetings with officers were prohibited, campaign teams approached families in garrison towns to build contacts and assess opinions.<sup>191</sup> Over the course of 2004 the opposition “talked to [the families] about what democracy was in general, and how Yushchenko represents democratic principles… We asked them to influence their husbands not to act against the opposition.”<sup>192</sup> In discussing the utility of this approach, one Our Ukraine official pointed out that “family members can be good barometers.”<sup>193</sup>

After making these connections, challengers mobilized families to actively convey their legitimacy. During a “letter from your mother” campaign prior to the elections, for example, military parents who supported Yushchenko wrote letters to young officers explaining their support.<sup>194</sup> The tactic was continued throughout the protests, when leaflets were distributed to the police within Kiev stating “Guys, you are on the wrong side. Your

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<sup>189</sup> “Yushchenko calls on soldiers and militia to defend Ukrainian people” *Korrespondent.net*, November 24, 2004.

<sup>190</sup> General Igor Smeshko. Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>191</sup> Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>192</sup> People’s Deputy and former MVS officer. Personal interview. August 13, 2008.

<sup>193</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>194</sup> Our Ukraine parliamentarian. Personal interview. June 7, 2005.

families are on the other side.”<sup>195</sup> One Interior Ministry officer mobilized on the night of November 28<sup>th</sup> said that his mother had called that evening “to tell him that he could never come home if he marched to the Maidan.”<sup>196</sup> The willingness of friends and family members to embrace opposition forces likely altered the lens through which they might otherwise be viewed.<sup>197</sup>

Civil society leaders similarly worked to establish their legitimacy within the security forces. Recognizing the mistakes of 2001 and responding to trainings by the Serbian Otpor leaders, members of Pora began to establish relationships with neighbors and families of police officers. Mykhaylo Svystovych recalls that he would “go for walks with my children, talking to the families...they were all in Interior Ministry housing, so it was easy to find them, work with their neighbors, and give them information... they were mostly normal people that wanted to improve their lives.”<sup>198</sup> Civil society efforts did not appear to have been as centrally coordinated as Our Ukraine – from his perspective, Svystovych observed that “it was almost viral.”<sup>199</sup>

Retired military and MVS officers offered a second indirect avenue which to persuade individuals in uniform of the legitimacy of the opposition’s cause.<sup>200</sup> Over the course of 2004, Our Ukraine built relationships with local “councils of veterans” in every region by

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<sup>195</sup> Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>196</sup> Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>197</sup> This point was made by a number of interviewees in both the police and the military, across ranks. One mid-ranking officer pointedly noted, for example, that “the members of the families of the milizia guys were very much pro-Yushchenko, and they were participating at the Maidan along with many other people. They were bringing food to the people on the streets.” Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005. An Our Ukraine security consultant similarly described the phenomenon: “perhaps a week after tents were erected, the kids and wives of the generals were already on the Maidan. They’d say ‘I’m going to Maidan’ and Dad wouldn’t be able to say anything.” Officer, SBU (former). Personal interview. June 2, 2005.

<sup>198</sup> Mykhaylo Svystovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> According to Antonets, there are about 500,000 retired military professionals residing in Ukraine.

focusing on legal protection of veterans.<sup>201</sup> By the autumn, organizers discovered that due to the ongoing work they did with veterans, “most of them supported us. In fact we were getting closer to them through their economic and social interests.”<sup>202</sup> The effort was part of a broader Our Ukraine “military project” begun in December 2002, when the retired chief of the Ukrainian air force, General Volodymyr Antonets, joined ranks with the opposition after he was dismissed by Kuchma.<sup>203</sup> The program, run by former police and military officers, became a natural liaison for contact with current SBU and Interior Ministry officers, as many supporters would then reach out to friends and former colleagues.<sup>204</sup> On the Maidan, retired military officers played a liaison role by welcoming individuals from the military who wanted to publicly express their support for Yushchenko.<sup>205</sup> Statements by dozens of retired and active military officers who had joined the Our Ukraine ranks were heavily publicized by Our Ukraine forces, appealing to current officers not to attack the crowds.<sup>206</sup> On the night of November 28<sup>th</sup>, Our Ukraine leaders sent groups of retired and currently serving military officers who had joined the Orange

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<sup>201</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>202</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005. For the majority of the campaign, the team’s work centered primarily on conventional campaign issues, such as retirement pay and the rights of families, in an attempt to gain votes from servicemen and veterans living in Ukraine.

<sup>203</sup> Antonets had retired from the army in 1999, after being relocated by Kuchma to “such a position that I could never have accepted.” He and Kuchma had fallen out over the sale of Ukrainian military aircraft to commercial airlines. Antonets created a team of former colleagues and volunteer military retirees who had worked in each of Ukraine’s 24 oblasts. Each regional center consisted of five individuals: “one for internal troops, the other for the army, another for the minister of emergencies, the fourth for border troops, and the fifth to supervise.” Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>204</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>205</sup> Coordinator, Association of Ukrainian officers. Personal interview. August 6, 2008. Decamped in the Kiev trade union building, the ‘Association of Ukrainian officers’ acted as a primary contact point for such officers. One of the organization’s representatives later recalled that “we’d have someone come and say I’m in the military and want to help. They’d come into that room, we would talk to them, given them something warm, and send them out into the cold.” Through this organization and others, the opposition was able to bridge institutional gaps and reach out to individuals in uniform.

<sup>206</sup> Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

ranks to meet the troops and attempt to persuade them not to implement illegitimate orders.<sup>207</sup>

Although it was particularly difficult to develop support in eastern Ukraine, efforts were made to print materials in Russian, to acknowledge the political and cultural importance of the language to the regions.<sup>208</sup> One Our Ukraine official recalls the stark difference between attitudes in the two parts of the country. “If officers in the west were contacted such people almost openly, then in the east it was absolutely different. Such contacts were absolutely closed. In regional departments of the Interior Ministry we were looking for people there who supported us if not openly, then implicitly, secretly.”<sup>209</sup>

Challengers were aware of the practical implications of regional differences in perceptions of their legitimacy. After unsuccessful protests in the eastern Donbass region in 2003, Our Ukraine leaders concluded that they would not receive necessary levels of public support there. “Thus,” they decided, “the principal competition is to take place in central Ukraine with spot activities in the East and the South. Particular attention is to be given to Kiev and Kiev oblast.”<sup>210</sup> Beginning in August 2004, in preparation for the Orange Revolution, the opposition had also begun to heavily court the military and interior ministry establishments in and around Kiev. Organizers used bureaucratic regulations – applications for permits for mass action – as excuses to meet with the local authorities in Kiev to “feel their moods” and establish as much legitimacy through bureaucratic procedure as possible.<sup>211</sup> Secretly, Antonets says, “we started contacts within [regional]

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<sup>207</sup> “The Stealthy Role of Military Informers in Ukraine Revolution.” *Agent France Presse*, February 15, 2005.

<sup>208</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Our Ukraine internal memo dated 11/5/03 and given to the author by Our Ukraine officials in June 2005

<sup>211</sup> Our Ukraine team also used bureaucratic regulations to their advantage. For any event throughout Ukraine, movement coordinators had a “special plan for preparation and conduct.” In addition to applying for city permits prior to mass events, they would also send out formal letters to the appropriate people in the local Kiev

sub-units, circulating leaflets and informational brochures. We published a lot of products to influence that group of people.”<sup>212</sup> They reached out to students at the Kiev Interior Ministry academy, knowing that they were likely to get a receptive audience with the young cadets.<sup>213</sup> When later asked about the impact of the Ukrainian armed forces on the outcome of the Orange Revolution, a Defense Ministry official responded enigmatically, “Do not discount the efforts made by the opposition to convince us not to use arms and to convince us to support their candidate.”<sup>214</sup>

Finally, as had been the case in Serbia, it was important to take steps to expose and diffuse regime propaganda attacking challenger legitimacy. When the student group Pora was accused by the SBU of storing grenades in their office after one September raid, Pora refuted the charges and five hundred students demonstrated around a pile of lemons representing the alleged weapons.<sup>215</sup> During the Orange Revolution, it was particularly important to reiterate that the movement reflected popular will and were committed to nonviolent tactics. This was sometimes a challenge in the Interior Ministry, where the opposition found “difficult contacts because they were against Yushchenko. The main message of the authorities was that Yushchenko was trying to get power by force. Our

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government, Interior Ministry and the SBU. These letters, they say, provided them with “an excuse for a meeting so that we could feel their moods, and know what to expect.” In Kiev, particular care was taken to connect with the city counsel and Interior Ministry staff subordinate to it. Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005; Our Ukraine official. Personal interview. June 14, 2005.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid. Antonets later recalled that “as for the younger people, they did not have access to much information, they did not know this information, and so it was sufficient to tell them this information.” Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>214</sup> Press secretary, Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. Personal interview. June 6, 2005. (Unfortunately, he declined to elaborate.)

<sup>215</sup> “Students Protest Against Police 'Provocations' in Western Ukraine” *Kiev Interfax* November 28, 2004. (Accessed via Lexis Nexis)

counter-campaigning argued that it was [instead]...the people who wanted to get rid of the old power.”<sup>216</sup>

Although all media sources but one were controlled by pro-presidential forces, the independent station Channel 5 played a role in helping to counter regime propaganda. In one relevant example, video tapes had “appeared” in many major police stations prior to the protests, ostensibly documenting the Yushchenko team’s violent contempt for the police and desire to destroy Yanukovych.<sup>217</sup> One journalist who watched the tape compared it to the infamous “two minutes of hate” in George Orwell’s *1984*.<sup>218</sup> After contacts in the police forces brought the tape to Channel 5, the station “showed this tape on television and discussed it. We tried to show that they were attempting to brainwash, to manipulate the police. Maybe some people in the police watched it.”<sup>219</sup>

Once the political crisis was underway, the calm behavior of demonstrators further belied negative propaganda and enhanced challenger legitimacy. One official present at National Security and Defense Council meetings at the time of the Orange Revolution recalls having “a great deal of respect for the fact that the Yushchenko team did all it could to prevent any kind of conflict. They did not look very aggressive. They’d offer food, clothes, in a very friendly way. They didn’t get involved in “sharp” decisions. It was amazing.”<sup>220</sup> From the Maidan, Yushchenko was adamant about approaching the conflict through exclusively nonviolent methods, arguing that attempted victory through violent

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<sup>216</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>217</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005. Corroborated by a Fifth Channel journalist. Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005. The tapes were released to the Fifth Channel by a police officer and thereafter shown on television and discussed by the journalist, who “tried to show that they were attempting to brainwash, to manipulate the police.”

<sup>218</sup> Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

means would provide a marked contrast to the liberal democratic principles on which Our Ukraine based its legitimacy.<sup>221</sup>

Extensive participation by Ukrainian women has also been cited as a factor that helped counteract regime propaganda. One security official remembers that groups of women would “encourage [the police] not to take illegal actions. I want to emphasize this very significant gender factor...near the buffer zone, there was a chain of women who encouraged the police, and given them food. They offered them coffee, tea... and put carnations in their shields.”<sup>222</sup> At the very least, the presence of women seems to have contributed to a higher degree of fraternization between the crowds and the nearby troops. As one recalls, “we were asked to preserve civil order, so there would be no unrest. Then we saw that all people are kind and smiling and throwing flowers, and there were girls there, and it was pleasant to look at them.”<sup>223</sup>

From the Maidan, messages appealed to common concepts of legitimacy and stressed unity between the security forces and protestors. PORA activists led the crowd in numerous chants directed at the security forces deployed nearby, including “Police are with the people,” “Don’t shoot, we’re your brothers,” “Brothers, put down your shields,” and “A Ukrainian soldier is a patriot, not a killer.”<sup>224</sup> While these statements may appear inconsequential, they seem to have had an emotional impact on some in uniform who heard them.<sup>225</sup> Organizers acknowledge that one of the objectives of these tactics was to

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<sup>221</sup> Our Ukraine official. Personal interview. June 14, 2005.

<sup>222</sup> Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>223</sup> Yevhen Julai, Interior Ministry soldier, *The Seventh Day*. Kiev, Volodymyr Ariev and Channel Five Productions, 2005. In Ukrainian. Translated by YorkZimmerman staff. McFaul has also noted the placement women to defuse tension in police lines.

<sup>224</sup> Anastasia Bezverkha. Personal interview. June 7, 2005.

<sup>225</sup> In his response to a June 2005 email, one military officer wrote: I cannot refrain from thanking the Ukrainian people for its understanding of our duties. They knew that we could not stand with them shoulder to shoulder at squares of our cities, because either side would perceive that as deployment of troops in streets. But they

“confuse” those at the receiving end of orders, and to “make sure that they would hesitate before firing on anyone.”<sup>226</sup>

### ***Strategic Objective III: Raise the Costs of Repression***

Despite challengers’ efforts to establish relative legitimacy, some forces would inevitably remain unmoved. Troops from the Crimea were likely to remain sympathetic to Yanukovic, and viewed the actions of the Orange protestors as illegitimate. Leaders at the top of the power ministries had more at stake in maintaining the status quo, and were less interested in questions of relative legitimacy. Even within western and central Ukraine, some security force members on the fence might instinctively follow orders, or feel that the costs of disobedience outweighed the benefits of a challenger victory.

Some degree of deterrence was thus also necessary. Leaders of the Orange Revolution provided frequent reminders that individuals would be held personally accountable for unprovoked violence against civilians. Though the formulation of the message varied, its essence was reiterated at every level of the chain of command in communications to the security forces – and particularly the Interior Ministry. In each interaction, members of the opposition offered reminders that they were keeping track of what actions individuals were undertaking, and that they would be held to responsibility “after the fact.” One member of the Our Ukraine leadership recalls that there was not “a single person with whom we did not have contact among the senior officers. With all of them, we had conversations explaining that either you are with us, or you realize that it

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believed that we would not betray them in those dark hours. Passing thousands of military stations of Ukraine, the demonstrator shouted “The Army is with the People!” We were very grateful for such confidence in us.” Officer, Ukrainian army. Email correspondence. June 10, 2005.

<sup>226</sup> Our Ukraine parliamentarian. Personal interview. June 9, 2004.

is not the end of the world, that it is not the end of life today. There will be a tomorrow.<sup>227</sup> Warnings began at the level of the senior political leadership. Yevhen Chervonenko, a former transport minister who joined Yushchenko's personal security team during the campaign, is reported to have admonished Kuchma directly that should he initiate the use of force, "this would be the worst way to end your rule, it would be the end of everything for you."<sup>228</sup> It can also be assumed that the issue of accountability arose during the numerous negotiations between Kuchma and Victor Yushchenko throughout the Orange Revolution.

The international diplomatic community also helped to increase costs of repression by communicating to President Kuchma that "if the government went down that route, they'd be pariahs."<sup>229</sup> As crowds began building in Kiev and as the crisis continued to unfold, avoidance of force was "the subject" brought up by senior diplomats in meetings with Kuchma's government.<sup>230</sup> Late on the night of November 28<sup>th</sup>, when interior troops were mobilized to move on Kiev, Secretary Powell called Kuchma, presumably to indicate the degree of seriousness with which the United States would view a crackdown.<sup>231</sup> When told that Kuchma was sleeping, embassy officials informed Kuchma's staff that "this did not remove responsibility from his shoulders if force was used."<sup>232</sup> While US officials did not publicly "spell out" what diplomatic sanctions would be meted out to those responsible for

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<sup>227</sup> Our Ukraine parliamentarian. Personal interview. June 7, 2005.

<sup>228</sup> Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>229</sup> Senior Western Diplomat. Personal interview, June 9, 2005; Western diplomat, Personal interview. June 3, 2005. A senior member of the law enforcement community who had participated in numerous meetings with Kuchma during the crisis credited United States diplomacy "for not grossly interfering, but for helping the politicians understand that the use of force was unacceptable" Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>230</sup> Senior Western Diplomat. Personal interview. June 9, 2005.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

violence against civilians, they did emphasize that allies of the regime would be “held personally accountable.”<sup>233</sup>

According to interviewees, an understanding of the potential legal costs of repression also played an important role in constraining the actions officers within the military and Interior Ministry.<sup>234</sup> Legislative steps had been taken over the preceding three years to increase the control of legal prosecutors, leading to increased awareness by MVS officers about the legality of their actions.<sup>235</sup> In the words of one Kiev-based officer, “officers have to think about how legal it would be to carry out an order, and the consequences of carrying out that order. If the order is illegal, the responsibility lies not only on the person who gives the order, but also the one who carries it out.”<sup>236</sup> Interior Ministry officers from the Directorate for Combating Organized Crime had recently been publicly indicted in the Gongadze murder, indicating a potential unraveling of traditional Interior Ministry invulnerability, and likely creating an additional “thinking point” for those considering illegal actions.<sup>237</sup> Picking up on this concern, challengers emphasized the consequences of initiating or following “illegal orders.” Our Ukraine organizer Taras Stetskiv later recalled: “we told them ‘we ask you not to violate the law, because you will be brought to responsibility.’ We repeated this like a prayer.”<sup>238</sup>

The potential costs of repression certainly appear to have been in the minds of individuals considering a crackdown. One observer recalls that, as the possibility of repression approached, “nobody wanted to be responsible for the orders. When there was

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<sup>233</sup> Western official. Personal interview. November 18, 2005.

<sup>234</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005. This opinion was also particularly prevalent in the military. General, Ukrainian Army, Personal interview. June 14, 2004.

<sup>235</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> As one senior diplomat observed, “the former culture of “*Shita Kiva*” (meaning “all sewn up”) “began breaking down in small ways.” Western diplomat. Personal interview. May 30, 2005.

<sup>238</sup> Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

no certainty about the way the situation would evolve, no one wanted to take responsibility.”<sup>239</sup> Consideration of the consequences of violence also seem to have played on the mind of SBU leader Igor Smeshko as he was propelled into action on the night of November 28<sup>th</sup>. In a revealing quote during an interview after the events, Smeshko recalled that “if Popkov came to try to deblock [clear the streets of Kiev], there would be blood. So what am I supposed to do in this case with myself? Just get a pistol and kill myself? Can you imagine? What would happen to me, to Kuchma, if there was blood? This is nonsense.”<sup>240</sup>

As had been in the case in Serbia, costs rose as the crowds grew. The large crowds that accumulated within the first few days are the most commonly cited deterrent to repression during interviews about the bloodless outcome of the Orange Revolution. Recognizing the importance of the “numbers” calculation, Our Ukraine leaders had determined in the weeks prior to the demonstrations that at least 50,000 protestors would be needed on the streets at all times to deter action by the 15,000 Interior Ministry troops stationed in the Kiev region.<sup>241</sup> Through their rallies over the course of the year, opposition strategists were able to predict a minimum “critical mass” of participants at the Orange Revolution.<sup>242</sup> In mid-October, after a series of repressive actions by the regime, Pora had also begun to “actively prepare for the

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<sup>239</sup> News journalist, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 2, 2005.

<sup>240</sup> General Igor Smeshko. Personal interview. June 8, 2005. On November 27<sup>th</sup>, Smeshko had made a public statement assuring the country that no force would be used against nonviolent protestors.

<sup>241</sup> Daniel Wolf “A 21st century revolt” *Guardian*, May 13, 2004; corroborated by interview with Antonets Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>242</sup> Daniel Wolf, “A 21st century revolt” *The Guardian* May 13, 2004. In the article, Roman Beszmertry recalls that “We knew from [previous] events that, if we distributed half a million invitations around Kiev, 8,000 people would come. We knew that if radio stations transmitted 100 announcements every day for a week, saying that a meeting would take place, 200,000 people would come. So if we brought 35,000 people from the regions, and added the people from Kiev, we believed we would have a minimum of 100,000 people in the square. The figures weren't random, they were taken from our experience.”

organization of mass protests.”<sup>243</sup> Our Ukraine had also put significant thought and resources into building numbers during the months prior to the Orange Revolution.<sup>244</sup> Particular efforts were made to engage the population in the Kiev region, with the knowledge that local participation would prove critical during the crisis.<sup>245</sup>

Over the first week of the demonstrations, numbers were particularly important at night. Crowds dwindled as Kiev residents and visitors went home to their own beds, leaving only those encamped in the tent city. Around the Maidan, coordinators distributed leaflets asking people to stay for as long as possible. They read: “Maidan is our place of protest. Stay here, bring your friends, let them replace you while you are at rest. Do not leave Maidan under any circumstances because the power is just waiting for it.”<sup>246</sup> On the night of November 28<sup>th</sup>, Our Ukraine coordinators estimate that about 200,000 civilians remained on the Maidan.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>243</sup>“A Case Study of the Civic Campaign Pora.” Bezverkha, Chupryna, and Kaskiv. (April 2005.) The group was split into two factions: “Black Pora,” which relied primarily on domestic funding sources and was considered the more ideologically strict of the two, and “Yellow Pora,” led by Vladislav Kaskiv, which tapped into foreign democracy assistance sources and advocated creating a PORA political party. For more information on the organizational split, please see Taras Kuzio, “PORA! Takes Two Different Paths.” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*. Volume 2, Issue 23. February 2, 2005.

<sup>244</sup> Throughout the campaign, “massive occasional rallies in Kiev and regions” were held by the opposition. “We had to constantly keep the heat up on the situation,” recalls Roman Bezsmertny, the campaign’s chief strategist. “We had to keep stirring it because we understood that the people will not come out just like that, they need to get used to the idea. Regional coordinator Taras Stetskiv recalls that “we were trying to prepare people to become real actors, and to get rid of fear. We did this step by step, with many rallies. Yana Dlugy “Behind Ukraine’s revolution: careful preparations” *Agence France Presse*, February 14, 2005; Our Ukraine post-election strategy summary”. Given to author June 2005. Because the opposition was not given access to any of the other major television channels (and the Fifth channel had single digit ratings throughout much of the campaign) Our Ukraine relied on rallies and public speeches throughout Ukraine to spread word of Yushchenko’s campaign; Volodymyr Filenko. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>245</sup> “...the principal competition is to take place in central Ukraine with spot activities in the East and the South. Particular attention is to be given to Kiev and Kiev oblast because revolutions happen in capitals.” Our Ukraine internal memo dated 11/5/03 and given to the author by Our Ukraine officials in June 2005. An additional benefit to basing the revolution the capital, according to one Our Ukraine staff member, was that its status as a major business center made it more difficult for the regime to take repressive steps that might disrupt the economy, such as closure of the Metro or cordoning off the city. Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>246</sup> Leaflet, Our Ukraine, November 2004. Given to author June 2005 by Voldomir Filenko and Taras Stetskiv, June 10, 2005.

<sup>247</sup> Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

At the tactical level, occupation of the public, visible space at the Maidan also helped to raise the stakes. After initially gathering at the Central Election Commission but finding it blocked by police, organizers led the crowds to the main square, from which long side streets blocked by opposition vehicles radiated outwards.<sup>248</sup> There at the Maidan, as one PORA organizer pointed out, troops “could not surround [us] so as not to let people in.”<sup>249</sup> The configuration of the square and sheer size of the crowds would have made it difficult for the regime to disperse protestors without engaging in “high risk” activities. According to one source present at the time, an understanding that the Interior Ministry “had too few human resources and material to peacefully make the crowds leave the Maidan” played a role in persuading the SBU leadership to confront Interior Ministry on November 28th.<sup>250</sup>

An ability to muster masses also provided the opposition movement with the potent if unspoken threat of more coercive nonviolent sanctions. One coordinator recalls that “in principle, we were able, if we needed to, to stop everyday life in Kiev. To stop the traffic, stop railways, to create huge rallies throughout the streets. The capital would be paralyzed. But this was always a last resort.”<sup>251</sup>

Media exposure also helped to raise the potential costs of repression. Over the course of the campaign, a number of tactics had been employed by challengers to increase media focus on acts of repression. The inclusion of prominent Members of Parliaments within the ranks of civil society had attracted media attention to individuals arrests.<sup>252</sup> Most dramatically, after his September poisoning, the ravaged face of Victor Yushchenko provided painful evidence of the

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<sup>248</sup> Organizers have also stated that the Maidan was chosen as the epicenter of the post-election protests because of its significance in Ukrainian history, Volodymyr Filenko. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>249</sup> Anastasia Bezverkha. Personal interview. June 7, 2005.

<sup>250</sup> Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005. Although water cannons were stationed near the Maidan and Presidential Administration building, it was not certain that this would be an effective mechanism against such large crowds.

<sup>251</sup> Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>252</sup> Mykhaylo Svystovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

repressive actions of the regime and its allies and served as a rallying point within the Ukrainian population.<sup>253</sup> In October the civic group Pora gave a press conference in Unian in which it announced the creation of a “black list,” citing individuals who had engaged in repression against activists.<sup>254</sup>

Should a crackdown have occurred during the Orange Revolution, it would have been covered live and broadcast to the nation and abroad. One tactic employed by the Our Ukraine leadership to heighten potential accountability of police and interior troops was the introduction of a 24-hour live camera feed on the Maidan and transmission to the pro-opposition Fifth Channel. This tactic was particularly effective in creating disincentives to crack down on the tent camp in the evening, when the crowds had dwindled. Current Foreign Minister of Ukraine Boris Tarasyuk, the author of this tactic, remembers:

There were dangers, so I suggested to the Fifth Channel that they install the picture of Maidan at night to keep it in live transmission. So if anything happened, people would be watching, and they would immediately understand what was going on.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Shukan writes that “the moral outrage in front of Kuchma regime’s methods and acts, able to stimulate citizens’ support for the oppositional cause, is used by protest managers at the meeting held on the 18th of September where Yushchenko appears in public for the first time after his poisoning with a badly disfigured face, [Yushchenko] addresses directly the citizens’ emotions and calls upon insurrection against the transgression of the moral: “the last two weeks were the most tragic in my life. There was a risk that I would not be here today with you even in a wheel chair.” Shukan, 2006 23. (Shukan cites *Ukrainska Pravda*, September 18, 2004)

<sup>254</sup> Yellow PORA held a press conference to announce “the creation of a “Black List”, which cited “any bureaucrats and state officials that undertake repressive measures against activists of the civic campaign PORA and members of other civic organizations. Also included in the list will be the names of those who have violated constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens.” Civic group ‘blacklists’ officials accused of repression against Ukrainian citizens *Brama*, 10/4/04, <http://www.brama.com/news/press/2004/10/041014pora.html>

<sup>255</sup> Our Ukraine official. Personal interview. June 14, 2005.

The move was, in the words of one western diplomat, “the ultimate trump card” and sent a clear message: “Come and get us, but if you are going to make us bleed, it will be ‘live on CNN.’”<sup>256</sup>

As had been the case in Serbia, certain elements considered raising the costs of repression through violence. One Our Ukraine staffer admits that some within the campaign considered a “forced scenario,” recalling that it was a “game of gambling, and everyone wanted to make higher bets. If people died, it would be a symbol of sacrifice – a mobilizing notion for the mass movement. These people were scheming for bloodshed, which they thought would make them victors.”<sup>257</sup> However this was primarily a fringe position and the leadership of Our Ukraine concluded that in order for mobilization tactics to work effectively, it was necessary to eliminate pretexts for repression.<sup>258</sup> Former Defense Minister Ivan Marchuk, though openly sympathetic to the opposition, similar stated that regime violence, if provoked, might be warranted.<sup>259</sup> As Andrew Wilson has noted in his account of the Orange Revolution, some Western media sources were “already primed to concentrate on the ‘nationalist threat’” from ultra-nationalist organizations such as “Ukrainian National Assembly” (UNA) and its paramilitary wing, Ukraine Resistance

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<sup>256</sup> Western diplomat, Personal interview. June 1, 2005. This individual also cited the absence of live television as a “critical factor” at the Tiananmen Square massacre in China.

<sup>257</sup> Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>258</sup> On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, the second day of protests, the public office of the Interior Ministry issued a public announcement that “law-enforcement bodies will only intervene if there appears a real danger to people’s safety.” Law enforcement officials acknowledge that there were “elements that tried to provoke localized conflict” within the crowd. Members of the movement claim that these individuals were paid by the Yanukovych camp. Anastasia Bezverkha. Personal interview. June 7, 2005. Officer, SBU (former). Personal interview. June 2, 2005; Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.; Statement by Tatyana Podoshevskaya. “Interior Ministry Urges Citizens Not To Yield to ‘Provocations’ Moscow ITAR-TASS. November 23, 2004.

<sup>259</sup> Marchuk announced: “Friends, you need to understand that there are instances when governments can legitimately use force: when government bodies come under attack: either the presidential administration, the Cabinet of Ministers, the Supreme Council, the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court. Therefore, there should be no storming. Any storming will invariably cause casualties “Marchuk: Ukraine’s Ex-Defense Minister Warns Army, President” BBC Monitoring International Reports November 26, 2004.

Front (UNSO.)<sup>260</sup> Recognizing the potential for negative spin, organizers had asked UNA/UNSO to restrict its role in the events, and minimized its public profile.<sup>261</sup>.

Finally, there were enormous potential costs to officers who had friends and family on the Maidan – an issue particularly relevant for those from Western and Central Ukraine. A Kiev-based TV journalist remembers a particularly poignant moment when:

A commander of a small unit saw among the protestors his brother. The brother came to the fence. It was prohibited to talk to each other, but they just hugged each other for about a minute. We filmed this, of course. Many soldiers were discussing [the fact] that they had relatives, girlfriends in the crowd.<sup>262</sup>

The issue appears to have been on the minds of officers throughout the chain of command. One retired army colonel observed, “Many people in the military, law enforcement, had their own families, and children there - daughters, sisters, mothers... that certainly had an effect.”<sup>263</sup> Another colonel observed that if troops had fired, “they could easily be shooting their parents.”<sup>264</sup>

#### ***Strategic Objective IV: Mitigate Costs of Accommodation***

Challengers successfully mitigated the potential costs for those willing to accommodate their actions. Protecting those officers who did decide to assist the opposition was essential in reducing costs of accommodation. Within the Interior Ministry, those who indicated

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<sup>260</sup> Wilson (2005) 134.

<sup>261</sup> Igor Masov. Personal interview. August 9, 2009.

<sup>262</sup> Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>263</sup> Col Mykola Sungurovsky, Personal interview. June 1, 2005.

<sup>264</sup> Colonel, Euro-Atlantic Integration Department, Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. Personal interview. June 9, 2005.; Similarly, a senior law enforcement official noted, “people who worked for the security services all had family, friends, and in many cases children, on the Maidan. Because of this, I was convinced that direct conflict between the people and security forces was impossible.” Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

support for the opposition or disloyalty to Kuchma risked unemployment.<sup>265</sup> Particularly in Western Ukraine, politicians working with police communities and their families found that it “wasn’t difficult to persuade them [to support the opposition] it was just difficult to overcome their anxiety, to make them less fearful” of retribution.<sup>266</sup> One primary understanding, therefore, was that the identity of those leaking information would be protected. As junior and mid-ranking officers called information in to the Our Ukraine and Pora headquarters, their anonymity was guaranteed. One observer recalls that informants “would have special phones. You buy a prepaid card for about 40 UAH [\$8], you put the card in the phone, you make a call, and no one would know it, then you would give the information. They would never tell who it was and would never call on general phones.”<sup>267</sup> One activist recalls that as he cultivated contacts, he was always careful to offer plausible deniability to potential informants – he would never solicit their opinions directly, but instead would obliquely refer to a “third party” who might have expressed opposition to the regime.<sup>268</sup>

The immunity enjoyed by members of parliament was also used to support police officers who protected them. During the course of the Orange Revolution, a group of mid-ranking MVS officers of the territorial quarter of the Kiev district openly signed a letter stating that they were pro-Yuschenko. A colleague recalls the role played by the members of Parliament, or “Peoples Deputies”: “What happened was that there were some

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<sup>265</sup> Openly, the heads of departments were afraid to show any views in favor of Yushchenko because people would have been fired right away. According to the law they could be fired right away. The head of my department (a sub-department) was even fired for asking whether anyone would like to join him in discussions on the 5<sup>th</sup> Channel. It was just before the second round of the elections, when it was getting more popular to put your opinions on the 5th channel”. Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>266</sup> People’s Deputy and former MVS officer. Personal interview. August 13, 2008.

<sup>267</sup> Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>268</sup> I. Polkachuk. Personal interview. June 13, 2005.

generals who came to fire them. But the militia guys who were pro-Yushchenko brought in some Peoples' Deputies to protect them. So they were not fired, because of that.”<sup>269</sup>

Challengers also felt that it was important to address longer-term concerns about professional futures under new leadership. As one commentator observed, orders to crack down would have been “given by people with no future if Yuschenko was in charge, so they had nothing to lose. They were really dangerous because they had nothing to lose.”<sup>270</sup>

Another member of the diplomatic corps voiced similar anxieties: “There was a great deal of concern that there would be another Tiananmen, because it was the oligarchs who would lose from [the Revolution], and because they were the ones with the power.”<sup>271</sup> Aware of sensitivity to professional costs, Our Ukraine offered assurances that the security forces would not be uniformly purged if Yushchenko became president, thus offering all but the worst offenders a stake in the outcome of the “revolution.” In light of the high stakes at the top of the chains of command, Our Ukraine organizers felt that it was particularly important for those communicating with police and military officers at the mid and lower-ranking levels to be reassuring, and to “make them believe that after Yushchenko was president they would still have a position, that their families would still have food.”<sup>272</sup>

Although no deals appear to have been struck, opposition forces were careful in their public statements to explicitly offer servicemen participation in the future government.<sup>273</sup> Yushchenko declared from Maidan: “The country needs your honesty, your experience,

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<sup>269</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>270</sup> News journalist, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 2, 2005.

<sup>271</sup> Western diplomat, Personal interview. June 1, 2005. In pessimistic moments, even some members of the opposition also had doubts about their prospects of success. Two days before the November 21 runoff election, Yulia Tymoshenko, a fiery leader of the opposition coalition, is reported to have stated: “There will be several days of protest, and then they will crack down.” Adrian Karatnycky “Ukraine's Orange Revolution”, *Foreign Affairs*, April 12, 2005.

<sup>272</sup> People’s Deputy and former MVS officer. Personal interview. August 13, 2008.

<sup>273</sup> General Popkov was dismissed in early 2005. See Tarak Kuzio, “Kyiv Launches Far-Reaching Reform of Interior Ministry” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 2 Issue 44 (March 04 , 2005)

and your professionalism.”<sup>274</sup> Our Ukraine leaders had further stated that they would not persecute members of the security forces who had been “forced” to undertake illegal actions under the former regime, raising the potential for amnesty in many cases. This has been cited by some military experts as a major factor in the campaign’s ability to sway the security sector.<sup>275</sup> On November 25, Oleksandr Zinchenko, campaign manager for Yushchenko, made a public statement to the security forces: “All law enforcement employees who turn to the people's side will not be prosecuted for . . . breaking illegal orders.”<sup>276</sup>

Finally, the immediate costs associated with potential chaos were also cited as a primary concern – particularly by the Interior Ministry and the SBU, tasked with maintaining order. For this reason, it was essential that the crowds be perceived as unthreatening. In addition to contributing to challenger legitimacy and increasing the “backfire” dynamic against repression, then, maintaining a strong commitment to nonviolent tactics and an organizational system capable of implementing them was critical in allaying concerns about the potential costs of accommodation.<sup>277</sup> One Interior Ministry professional later observed that the “the police were very nervous. Despite the fact that some hated the former regime, they were very disciplined by nature and couldn’t allow chaos or violence.”<sup>278</sup> One military general sympathetic to the demonstrators nonetheless recalled his concerns about escalation:

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<sup>274</sup> Yush quote from legitimacy section

<sup>275</sup> Col Mykola Sungurovsky. Personal interview. June 1, 2005.

<sup>276</sup> David Holley, “High court: results not yet valid”: Election won’t be official until appeal decided, it rules” *Los Angeles Times*, November 24, 2004.

<sup>277</sup> The dangers of chaos had been highlighted before the election at a roundtable conference at the pro-Yushchenko Razumkov Center in Kiev on law enforcement and election campaigns. It had been attended by members of the law enforcement community and representatives from Our Ukraine. Col Mykola Sungurovsky. Personal interview. June 1, 2005.

<sup>278</sup> Victor Tsyganov, instructor at the Kiev Interior Ministry Academy. Personal interview. June 2, 2005.

Our combat readiness was very high at that time. Not to use [force] against the people, but to respond to provocation. We received information that people were coming to the military bases, saying come with us, waving banners. We cannot blame these people, they were in a mood where they were calling everyone to join their movement. It was democratic, but there was a provocative element, and we had to evaluate which was which.<sup>279</sup>

Organizers note relentless pressure from the crowd to take increasingly bolder actions.<sup>280</sup>

Boris Tarasyuk, another prominent Our Ukraine leader, remembers that “the situation was rather hot and people were becoming impatient and asking us “why don’t you lead us to attack?”<sup>281</sup> By giving potential hotheads frequent instructions with “short-term, concrete goals,” coordinators were able to “raise confidence and the belief that ‘we are doing the right thing.’”<sup>282</sup> Yushchenko ally Yulia Timoshenko, especially was inclined to lead more “radical” actions – specifically, to storm the Presidential Administration building – but was reportedly convinced on a number of occasions that they would be too dangerous.<sup>283</sup> Each time she backed down, both at the urging of Yushchenko and at the realization that her actions were likely to trigger

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<sup>279</sup> General, Ukrainian Army. Personal interview. June 4, 2005.

<sup>280</sup> One variation of a “forced scenario” that would have risked a violent response by authorities was the storming of Kuchma’s Presidential Administration building and parliament. Steski recalls that some of the Our Ukraine leadership was constantly “hesitating between storming or just blocking those buildings. Four times, there were decisions to storm the government, but they were cancelled. People were ready to go storm barehanded... despite the fact that there were troops inside.” Taras Steski. Personal interview. June 10, 2005. According to Yuriy Lutsenko, “There have been two tactics for developing the revolutionary situation that was originated by the Independent Square [rallies]... The first one, which has been urged by Yuliya Tymoshenko and other people, is to take a revolutionary path, capture [government] offices, proclaim Yushchenko’s victory, and appoint a revolutionary cabinet of ministers. I have opposed such a tactic and supported an evolutionary development of events, which we are actually witnessing today. It is also a victorious tactic, even if somewhat longer. What is important, it is definitely a bloodless tactic and an elegant one, as Yushchenko says.” Jan Maksymiuk “Ukraine: Street Rebel Becomes Country’s Top Policeman” *Radio Free Liberty* 1/11/05

<sup>281</sup> Our Ukraine official. Personal interview. June 14, 2005.

<sup>282</sup> Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005. To keep the crowds nearby and out of trouble, Our Ukraine brought a constant stream of rock concerts, Ukrainian athletes, and other national celebrities to a large stage they had set up at the Maidan, echoing an approach used by the 2000 Otpor movement in Serbia to rally large numbers of citizens. Opposition members of parliament, retired military and police officers, and other sympathetic officials also took the microphone to offer support and direction.

<sup>283</sup> Our Ukraine parliamentarian. Personal interview. June 9, 2004.

orders to shoot.<sup>284</sup> In an interview later, Smeshko said that opposition aggression was on Bilokun's mind as the orders for mobilization were weighed on November 28<sup>th</sup>.<sup>285</sup> When asked during an interview what internal force was responsible for checking would-be advances, two members of Our Ukraine responded simultaneously that the movement's primary restraining influence was "Victor Yushchenko."<sup>286</sup> He was, according to one of the interviewees, "the only person that the crowd would listen to. We were sure [storming buildings] was necessary, and that we could not stop people. The people would only follow the instructions of Yuschenko."<sup>287</sup>

One retired military officer, who had seen a colleague lose an eye when facing off against large crowds during duty in Russia, later highlighted the opposition's display of intermittent clips of peaceful interactions between protestors and police lines in Kiev as a notable tactic.<sup>288</sup> Events, recalls one senior law enforcement official, "even on the first few nights, were well-organized."<sup>289</sup> For example, he observed, it helped that organizers had created a "*cordon sanitaire* between the soldiers and the people. So the [opposition] people responsible for order did this."<sup>290</sup> The official also added that he couldn't recall "cases where people threw rocks or anything."<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> An Interior Ministry officer, she explained, had taken her aside and "said they were ordered to fire if more than fifty people appeared on the administration territory. So we had to retreat." "Independence with a Solidarity Twist" *Kommersant* November 29, 2004.

<sup>285</sup> Smeshko later recalled that Bilokun called him with the following message: "okay, I was at the Defense and Security Council meeting, and we decided not to use force... But Igor, can you promise me that they will not seize the government buildings? In the national security and defense council we did not discuss that we might just allow them to seize government buildings. You as chairman of security service – can you guarantee that they will not seize government buildings. Who would be responsible if they did? I would, as Minister of Interior affairs and in charge of the protection of the government buildings." General Igor Smeshko. Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>286</sup> Volodymyr Filenko. Personal interview. June 10, 2005. Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005. Also reiterated by Burkovsky in a later interview. Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>287</sup> Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>288</sup> Journalist, Fifth Channel, Personal interview. June 8, 2005.

<sup>289</sup> Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid. One crucial role of security volunteers was to create a two-person deep "buffer zone" between demonstrators and the guards surrounding the administrative buildings and around the Maidan.

<sup>291</sup> Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

On the Maidan, Our Ukraine and Pora’s internal security systems additionally strove to identify and confront “provocative elements” that might raise the costs of allowing them to continue.<sup>292</sup> Organizers charge that groups of provocateurs were bussed in by the Yanukovych campaign to attempt to ignite the situation.<sup>293</sup> A senior law enforcement official observed that of the Yanukovych supporters, “there was a group who were clearly criminal actors. The greatest risk of bloodshed was linked to these bandit groups, because any conflict initiated by the crowd would have required a response by the police. The situation could easily grow out of control.”<sup>294</sup> Because the movement could not afford to allow chaos or clashes, “prevention” guided internal security efforts.<sup>295</sup> A separate group of Yellow Pora volunteers controlled check points to “prevent any possible conflict with the security officers or police.”<sup>296</sup> Our Ukraine took similar measures.<sup>297</sup> Individuals caught stealing or behaving aggressively were reprimanded and escorted from the scene.<sup>298</sup> When it seemed necessary, Our Ukraine security members bought one-way train tickets home for would-be troublemakers.<sup>299</sup> A spirit of volunteerism propelling protestors was critical, Pora and Our Ukraine members say, in maintaining a calm and organized environment

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<sup>292</sup> I. Polkachuk. Personal interview. June 13, 2005. Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>293</sup> Yevghen Zolotariov. Personal interview. May 30, 2005; Our Ukraine parliamentarian. Personal interview. June 9, 2004; Officer, SBU (former). Personal interview. June 2, 2005, Volodymyr Filenko and Taras Stesikiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>294</sup> Senior law enforcement official, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>295</sup> Anastasia Bezverkha. Personal interview. June 7, 2005; Vladislav Kaskiv. Personal interview. June 11, 2005.

<sup>296</sup> Vladislav Kaskiv. Personal interview. June 11, 2005.

<sup>297</sup> Our Ukraine parliamentarian. Personal interview. June 9, 2005. Our Ukraine’s team similarly assigned “certain spots around which there were always shifts of people on duty” in order to preempt potential flare-ups. Coordinators assigned members of their security teams to roam the scene and confront potential problems. I. Polkachuk. Personal interview. June 13, 2005; Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>298</sup> Our Ukraine parliamentarian. Personal interview. June 9, 2005; Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>299</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005. They also took their names and made copies of their identification materials for future reference.

throughout the weeks at the Maidan.<sup>300</sup> Yellow Pora members who had received crowd control training passed on their knowledge to about 2,500 new recruits from the masses on the Maidan.<sup>301</sup> As there was no way to control every interaction between the opposing camps, calm attitudes proved particularly important in determining outcomes.<sup>302</sup> A member of the Pora security team observed that “we only made up a small percentage of the crowd. We wouldn’t be able to stop people if they hadn’t cooperated...it was only because the people themselves were very peaceful” that chaos or violence was avoided.<sup>303</sup>

As they developed internal discipline, challengers recognized the need to communicate with security forces about their intent to minimize the costs of allowing them to demonstrate. General Antonets, the head of the Our Ukraine security program, recalls the importance of allaying fears. When one SBU colonel interrogated him about his intents , Antonets recalls that:

I calmed him down, and told him that we would never have conflict with his service. Our job was to prevent any provocations by criminals or Yanukovych and to ensure order among the protestors. And actually, starting from that moment of the conversation with that colonel, we worked together on Maidan. And later, at the most tense moment on November 28<sup>th</sup>, they warned us.<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Officer, SBU (former). Personal interview. June 2, 2005. The former officer, who joined Our Ukraine after he retired, recalls that “we were approached all the time by regular people asking how they could help. This was on a volunteer basis.”

<sup>301</sup> Vladislav Kaskiv. Personal interview. June 11, 2005. Members of the crowd organized themselves into hierarchies: dividing themselves into groups of tens and even hundreds, and appointing group leaders. Taras Stepanovich Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>302</sup> One senior Our Ukraine official later recalled that “there was no bloodshed, despite the fact that sometimes the behavior of our opponents was too provocative. They were in much fewer numbers in Kiev. They felt, and we felt, that we were outnumbering them by many times. So they were sometimes too aggressive, but our people, on the contrary, were behaving in a very friendly manner, inviting them for dialogue, discussions, and very often it took place that they were fraternizing with each other. So we weren’t afraid, actually, of these uncontrolled contacts between rivals.” Our Ukraine official. Personal interview. June 14, 2005.

<sup>303</sup> Yevghen Zolotariov. Personal interview. May 30, 2005

<sup>304</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

Once security forces were convinced that the demonstrations would not pose a major security threat, they became more open to accommodating challengers' intent to continue.

### ***Strategic Objective V: Demonstrate Likelihood of Success***

From the stage at the Maidan, a popular refrain resounded off the Kiev facades: "*Razom nas bahato! Nas ne podolaty!*"? "Together, we are many! We cannot be defeated!"<sup>305</sup> The challengers successfully demonstrated the likelihood of their success. While Our Ukraine had been cultivating contacts within the military, interior ministry, and SBU, one coordinator said, "they produced no result before the people went out in the streets. Once people went out, those contacts finally gave us some results.... Without so many people in the streets there could have been no negotiations or agreements. It was the background against which such meetings could take place."<sup>306</sup>

For some who tacitly supported the opposition, fear that the fraudulent elections would simply yield business-as-usual politics had initially deterred them from publicly supporting the Orange cause until events unfolded more fully. One junior Interior officer interviewed for a local newspaper on condition of anonymity stated that he had "voted for Yushchenko and I think neither I nor many others in my detachment would act against the people, even if we got such an order...But I am not ready to speak about it openly yet. I will wait and

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<sup>305</sup>"Razom nas bahato! Nas ne podolaty!" *Greenjolly*, 2004.

<sup>306</sup> Volodymyr Filenko. Personal interview. June 10, 2005. A similar comment was made independently by another Our Ukraine staffer: "On several occasions, Yushchenko asked military and police officers not to obey illegal orders, but until people actually went to the streets, there were no signs of advancement, or of making them Yushchenko supporters." (Peter Burkovsky. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.) The most important factor for us was to make sure that so many people would come that we wouldn't have to care about the moods of the military, or the number of people in the services who supported us. Uniformed structures would never have spoken to us without our huge numbers. Volodymyr Filenko. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

see how things develop.”<sup>307</sup> Similarly, Interior Ministry academy professors in the Kiev region, “knew the situation, and in most cases they did support us, but were scared. They were afraid to speak up because they were not sure that we would gain power.”<sup>308</sup>

Others were also hedging. There was significant ambiguity, for example, about the position of Kiev mayor Alexander Omelchenko. One knowledgeable western observer cited “political calculations” as a key factor driving the former Kuchma ally to support the opposition, while also acknowledging that “the fact that he didn’t have full control over his institution may well have factored in.”<sup>309</sup> With much of the rank and file police officers in the Kiev region actively supporting Yushchenko, it would have been difficult to muster forces against them. His assessment of challenger strength may also have factored in: according to one account, Omelchenko’s support was explicitly contingent upon the opposition’s ability to muster masses: an aide to Yushchenko later recalled a meeting in which Omelchenko said “‘if you bring out 100,000 I’m with you, we’ll take power in one day. If it’ll be 99,000 I won’t be with you.’”<sup>310</sup>

Thus, argues one western official who observed the events closely, the issue of “principle versus pragmatism was less of a dilemma than you think...from the standpoint of history.”<sup>311</sup> He believes that had Smeshko and others felt confident that the government “would be able to sweep away the protesters, or successfully falsify elections, they wouldn’t have done anything substantial to stop this.”<sup>312</sup> Even Skipalsky, who spoke out

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<sup>307</sup> Oksana Yablokova “Kiev’s Boys in Blue Are Turning Orange” *Moscow Times*, November 30, 2004.

<sup>308</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>309</sup> Western diplomat. Personal interview. May 30, 2005. Opposition sources also argue that their efforts to win over his subordinates played an important role

<sup>310</sup> Wilson (2005) 125. Also cited by D’Aneiri (2006).

<sup>311</sup> Western diplomat. Personal interview. July 22, 2008.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

against the regime far earlier than some of his other SBU colleagues, stated that he believed the opposition was “destined for victory.”<sup>313</sup>

Confidence that the opposition might indeed assume power was bolstered by the Central Election Commission’s announcement of official results supporting Yushchenko after the second round. David Black notes that soon after the announcement, election, several Kharkiv police officers authored anonymous open letters to parliament recounting their firsthand observations of election fraud.<sup>314</sup> Black further points out that after the second round, the number of citizens confident in a Yushchenko victory had risen to 45%, from 21% in May 2004.<sup>315</sup> As one junior MVS officer later said, the police “wanted to wait until Yushchenko won the elections.”<sup>316</sup> He recalls that “until the end of the re-run of the second round, they kept their neutrality and were afraid to openly show their views, so that they wouldn’t lose their jobs.”<sup>317</sup>

In meetings prior to the Orange Revolution, one critical message conveyed to friends and contacts, says Antonets, was confidence in an opposition victory. According to him, “It took major efforts and a long time to convince them that the old power would fall away – that it would not stay. But in any case, this was the message that it was important to send.” His outreach teams did not, he emphasized, “try to make them actively support us – we just

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<sup>313</sup> “Ukrainian Security Service Avoids Role in Political Struggle, Official Says” *Ukrayina Moloda* November 3, 2004. (World News Connection)

<sup>314</sup> Black (2005) 16.

<sup>315</sup> Black cites a Razumkov Center poll conducted November 25-29, 2004, noting that when asked, “which candidate has more chances to be elected president” 45% of respondents said Yushchenko, 30% said Yanukovych, 13% said both had an equal chance, and 12% found it difficult to find answer. Razumkov Center opinion poll. November 25-29, 2004.

(<http://foreignpolicy.org.ua/eng/headlines/society/opinion/index.shtml?id=3929>) cited by Black (2005) 15 ; Black additionally cites Democratic Initiatives opinion poll, conducted May 2004, as reported on Ukrainian Monitor website. 35% of respondents said Yanukovych would be elected as the president, and 21% believed that Yushchenko would be the next president. Democratic Initiatives opinion poll. May 2004.

(<http://foreignpolicy.org.ua/eng/headlines/society/opinion/index.shtml?id=3129>); cited by Black (2005) 15

<sup>316</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

tried to convince them that it was the end of the old power.”<sup>318</sup> A regional coordinator in Lviv similarly recalls that a primary message in meetings with police officers and their families was that they “could not avoid the change of government.”<sup>319</sup>

In his meetings with law enforcement officials, coordinator Taras Stetskiv recalls emphasizing both the probability of an opposition victory and the fact that Our Ukraine was observing their actions:

Those with whom we spoke, we told them: “Dear people, Kuchma will never win. And Yanukovych will not win, because the people are with Yuschenko. And we ask you not to violate the law, because you will be brought to responsibility.” We repeated this like a prayer. We won the propaganda war, and we made them hesitate, made them have some doubts that Kuchma would be able to win. This is very important, when your enemy is not sure, but you are sure. You have all the advantages.<sup>320</sup>

As Stetskiv observed, their opponents at the top of the power ministries were not “sure.”

Ambiguity in the positions of other security forces benefited the opposition movement. In addition mid and senior-level officials within the Ministry of Internal Affairs were well-connected with business circles, which were increasingly supporting the opposition.<sup>321</sup> Defections from the regime by business leaders undoubtedly sent signals to individuals in their social circles – including Interior Ministry officers – about the regime’s decreased chances of survival.<sup>322</sup> The resultant cascade of defections fits closely with proposed

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<sup>318</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>319</sup> People’s Deputy and former MVS officer. Personal interview. August 13, 2008.

<sup>320</sup> Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>321</sup> Officer, Ministry of the Interior, Ukraine. Personal interview. June 12, 2005.

<sup>322</sup> Paul D’Anieri posits in a later article that “perhaps the crucial source of the 2004 restoration was the decision by several key oligarchs to defect from the Kuchma/Yanukovych camp, and the fact that they could do so without automatically forfeiting their business interests.” Paul D’Anieri The Orange ‘Restoration’: Ukraine’s Uneasy Pluralism *Harvard International Review*, 2007. D’Anieri has also noted the significance of financial and material resources provided by sympathetic Ukrainian businessmen. D’Anieri (2006) <http://www.harvardir.org/articles/1704/3/>

models considering different thresholds for different individuals within society, and the interaction between different groups' defections.<sup>323</sup>

Police officers and soldiers were also observing the positions of their colleagues and staff. Once some had been convinced of the legitimacy of Our Ukraine's cause, explicit efforts were also made to foster uncertainties between the ranks of security institutions. This was an explicit strategy, as organizers realized that within the security forces "it was important to start the movement from the bottom up, so that the leadership would understand that it would not be possible to fulfill the orders of Kuchma, because at the lower levels, they would not support orders to use arms."<sup>324</sup>

Thus as decision-makers further up the chains of command assessed their options, a lack of internal cohesion forced them to downgrade prospects of successfully quelling the demonstrations. As noted above, the decision of Interior Ministry cadets to join the Orange-clad crowds contributed to a demoralizing internal split in the Interior Ministry. In the Ministry of Defense, as one ministry official recalled there was pressure from below not to use force: "On the level of the leadership, there were statements to the lower ranks that there would be no criminal orders, while the lower ranks were asking their command for no criminal orders...it was actually kind of funny."<sup>325</sup> One senior officer believed that "the most influential factor" in the position taken by Defense Minister Kuzmuk was "the military environment." According to the officer, Kuzmuk "saw that the military wouldn't support a decision to use weapons."<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> Black similarly observes that "as the diversity of the participants increased, it probably lowered the participation threshold for new groups who might otherwise shun a predominantly student-driven protest." Black (2005) 20

<sup>324</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>325</sup> Press secretary, Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. Personal interview. June 6, 2005.

<sup>326</sup> General, Ukrainian Army. Personal interview. June 4, 2005.

Additionally, even more than had been the case in Serbia, the dynamic *between* security institutions appears to have been particularly acute. Decision-makers such as Pavkovic were made unequivocally aware of the possibility that others might “counterbalance” their actions against civilians. Our Ukraine leaders were aware of this dynamic, which enabled them to speak with greater confidence with those on the other side of the conflict.<sup>327</sup> A senior Our Ukraine consultant described the inertia created by the confusion: “It was sort of a checks and balances system. Nobody knew exactly what the other would do...people in security services didn’t know what those in the military would do.”<sup>328</sup> The ultimate trump was the army: some considered what one interviewee described as a “rock-paper-scissors” scenario, in which “the Interior Ministry beats protestors, and the military beats the Interior Ministry.”<sup>329</sup> Ultimately, according to a close observer of the events:

If the leadership of the Interior Ministry – Popov and his subordinates – had felt that they were going to be fully supported by their troops, it wouldn’t have mattered how many phone calls the SBU made [warning them not to crack down.] The real heroes in this story are the junior to mid-level officers who let it be known that they had no intention of obeying orders if this meant cracking down on protestors.<sup>330</sup>

Most overtly evident on the 28<sup>th</sup>, the dynamic of “checks and balances” between the military, the SBU, and the Interior Ministry appears to have created hesitation in those otherwise loyal to the regime. Interagency tensions were also exacerbated by movement

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<sup>327</sup> One Our Ukraine insider active on the night of the 28<sup>th</sup> later described his understanding of the positions of each service: “So what happened? The military said if something of this kind happened, they would take people of out of their barracks as well, and put soldiers, unarmed, between the people protesting and the interior forces in order to send a kind of warning to them. So they were ready to defend the people by themselves. The security service was also cooperating with us, and they expressed their readiness to counter this attack, though they didn’t have regular forces. But they were ready to use their manpower.” Our Ukraine official. Personal interview. June 14, 2005.

<sup>328</sup> Officer, SBU (former). Personal interview. June 2, 2005. General Antonets also recalled the dynamic: “You know it was difficult to confront the power being unarmed. But there were military parts of the army would have come to the side of Maidan, though it was not announced. There were also parts of the internal troops that were ready to take up arms and protect the demonstrators. But in this case it would have been civil war...” Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>329</sup> Western diplomat. Personal interview. May 30, 2005.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

leaders who were attuned to differing positions between the services: thus when Interior Ministry troops began mobilizing on November 28<sup>th</sup>, the Our Ukraine central headquarters was able to call the Kuchma's office to announce that "you just have internal troops. Neither the army nor the SBU will be on your side."<sup>331</sup>

### **Secondary case: Ukraine Without Kuchma (2001)**

The massive protests in Kiev and other Ukrainian cities in November and December 2004 were the largest, but not the first, to emerge out of popular frustration with the Kuchma regime. Practical experience and lessons learned from the tent camps and protests throughout the 1990s and most significantly during the 2001 "Ukraine Without Kuchma" campaign was crucial to the smooth conduct of the Orange Revolution.<sup>332</sup> However, few security force loyalty shift occurred during the course of the episode itself.

While the events of 2001 would ultimately play a role in the long-term attrition of Kuchma's power, a number of factors contributed to its immediate failures. Relevant for this study, the five proposed strategic objectives were not fully addressed. Both participants and members of the security forces agree that the approaches and actions of challengers contributed significantly to the failure to attain some of these objectives. The opposition was unable to establish relative legitimacy, raise the costs of repression, or adequately allay concerns about the dangers posed by the crowds. Perhaps most significantly, there was little optimism about the likelihood of challenger success. Weak and fractured leadership,

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<sup>331</sup> Volodymyr Antonets. Personal interview. June 15, 2005.

<sup>332</sup> I. Polkachuk, member of Pora security team. Personal interview. June 13, 2005.

. PORA representatives particularly cited the usefulness of participants from the student revolution of 1990, who were tasked with organizing the over 15,000 people living in the Pora tent camp. Anastasiya Bezverkha, Iryna Chupryna, and Vladyslav Kaskiv "A Case Study of the Civic Campaign PORA and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine" unpublished report, 5/05. Given to the author by Vladyslav Kaskiv in Kiev, June 2005.

resources, lack of resources, and inability to attract a significant following meant that even the challengers themselves were doubtful about their prospects for success in ousting Kuchma.

Ukraine without Kuchma began, interestingly, with the defection of a former Kuchma security guard. On November 28, 2000, Socialist Party leader Oleksandr Moroz released recordings to Parliament that implicated President Kuchma in the grisly murder of prominent Ukrainian journalist Georgiy Gongadze. Earlier that month, the body of Gongadze had been discovered in a shallow grave near Kiev, beheaded and disfigured by acid. Tapes implicating Kuchma in the affair were leaked by Mykola Melnychenko, a member of Kuchma's presidential guard.<sup>333</sup>

Two weeks later, on December 15, initial protests were launched, attended primarily by journalists outraged by the murder. A tent city was built on the Maidan, and moved to the main street Kryschatuk after city authorities began a "construction project" in the square. By early February, there were around 60 tents and 10,000 demonstrators in the city.<sup>334</sup> Maximum turnout was about 50,000.<sup>335</sup>

Key demands of demonstrators included the resignation of SBU head Leonid Derkach, Yuriy Kravchenko, the Minister of the Interior who had been heard on the tapes with Kuchma, and ultimately, of Kuchma himself. The first two of these demands were ultimately met – Kuchma replaced Kravchenko with an immediate subordinate in the Ministry and replaced Derkach with former Interior Minister and SBU head V. I.

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<sup>333</sup> At that time Melnychenko fled abroad and has since been living in the United States.

<sup>334</sup> D'Anieri (2006)

<sup>335</sup> See Taras Kuzio "Did Ukraine's Security Service Really Prevent Bloodshed During the Orange Revolution?" *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 2, Issue 16 (January 24, 2005)

Radchenko.<sup>336</sup> As one author has noted, the political reshuffling indicated some degree of responsiveness to popular pressure, but the regime's continuity permitted under the arrangement meant that few changes (or repercussions) actually occurred.<sup>337</sup> Kuchma, though weakened by the episode, was able to maintain control of his sources of power – including Ukraine's security forces.

As the tent city grew in Kiev, relationships with Kiev police forces were relatively cordial at first.<sup>338</sup> Police chief Oleksandr Savchenko regularly visited the site, communicating with coordinator Yuriy Lutsenko and others. While he maintained positive relations with Lutsenko and others, Savchenko's visits were viewed with suspicion by some organizers, who felt that the police chief attempted to provoke violence, and "had one aim –to get rid of the protests in any way."<sup>339</sup>

Information was sometimes passed on to protesters by police officers. M. Svystovych recalls that over the course of the three months, about twenty different officers approached him with information: sometimes leaking news of a potential attack on the tent city and suggestions to bolster numbers, information as who might be arrested and shouldn't walk alone, and advice not to drink or respond to potential provocations.<sup>340</sup> Some warnings that were ignored would have been better to heed. On one occasion, for example, organizers received a warning that there would be an attack on the tent city on the main road

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<sup>336</sup> Harasymiw, Bohdan. 2003. "Policing, Democratization and Political Leadership in Postcommunist Ukraine." Canadian Journal of Political Science. 36: 2 (June); 327

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> Oleh Novikov worked closely with Lutsenko during the events and is currently a member of parliament Oleh Novikov. Personal interview. August 8, 2008.

<sup>339</sup> Igor Masov recalled, for example that "from time to time, he would talk to us, push somebody, wait for someone to react so he could send forces." Igor Masov. Personal interview. August 9, 2009.

<sup>340</sup> Mykhaylo Svystovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008; While some of the information offered by officers was unreliable and would lead to unnecessary boosts of security within the tent camp, Svystovych recalls that they 'never led to harm.'

*Kreschatuk*, on the night of February 26<sup>th</sup>.<sup>341</sup> This time they chose to ignore the caution, leaving the camp sparsely populated. During the night, dozens of masked attackers dressed as ‘anarchists’ entered the camp and destroyed tents. Several of the attackers were captured and held by UNSO members who determined from their ID cards that they were actually students of Kiev’s Interior Ministry academy.<sup>342</sup> Although authorities in Kiev had permitted the capital’s protest camp to last longer than in other cities, orders to tear down the tent city were implemented on March 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>343</sup> That evening, about 400 uniformed police demolished Kiev’s tent city, arresting about forty demonstrators and taking them away unmarked grey vans to be detained when they attempted to resist.<sup>344</sup>

Another key moment of confrontation between opposition and security forces occurred later, on March 9, 2001, the birthday of Ukrainian national hero Taras Shevchenko. Opposition leaders had loosely planned a demonstration in Shevchenko park, where an enormous statue of the scholar dominates the extensive gardens surrounding it. The action was intended to force Kuchma, in the words of Lutsenko, to “see in person the level of tension in the country.”<sup>345</sup> There was some ambiguity about whether they would actually attempt to obstruct the president’s access to the statue.<sup>346</sup> The previous night, Kiev police had reinforced their ranks with what opposition organizers counted to be 2000 additional police forces bused into the park.<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> Igor Masov. Personal interview. August 9, 2009.

<sup>343</sup> Outside of Kiev, smaller ‘tent’ encampments erected by opposition forces had been destroyed by local police soon after they were built. In Kharkiv to the east of Kiev, about fifty police officers removed three tents that had been set up on the city’s main square. Participants of the protest reported that the police used “brutal force. Monday “Protesters say Kuchma must go over killing.” *The Times* (London) 2/12/01

<sup>344</sup> Patrick Cockburn “Police Tear Down Tent City to End Protests in Kiev” *The Independent*, 3/2/01

<sup>345</sup> Shevchenko (2003)

<sup>346</sup> Mykhaylo Svystovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>347</sup> Volodymyr Chemerys. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

The increasingly aggressive posture of the police was evident the following morning, when, as they attempted to enter the park, organizers were blocked by “a large number of police, without explanation, and they wouldn’t let anyone pass.”<sup>348</sup> As opposition MP Valentyna Semenyuk attempted to show her identification and pass through the police lines, she was struck by a police officer. Clashes immediately broke out between police and some groups of civilians, resulting in the arrest of about 20 protesters.<sup>349</sup> Conflict escalated over the course of the day. In response to the morning’s arrests, crowds of demonstrators gathered outside the Interior Ministry building, which some of the more radical proposed storming.<sup>350</sup> During this clash demonstrators, apparently led by nationalist party, UNA-UNSO, heaved rocks, bottles, and metal crowd-control fences into grim-faced police ranks, who in turn fired tear gas from behind their shields.<sup>351</sup> Video footage of the events reveals police forces chasing civilians into alleys and side streets and beating them: one female student was beaten and dropped headfirst from a one-story roof.<sup>352</sup> UNSO’s Igor Masov, who was imprisoned for four years for his role during the events, recalls that “our emotions really went up when force was used. It is the nature of a warrior – we cannot allow people to beat us. This is what happened in 2001.”<sup>353</sup>

That evening, police engaged in mass arrests at the Kiev train station and elsewhere. Students from outside Kiev who had traveled to the city for the events were beaten as they attempted to leave, and displayed their injuries to cameramen from independent media

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<sup>348</sup> Yuriy Lutsenko, Shevchenko (2003)

<sup>349</sup> Shevchenko (2003)

<sup>350</sup> Alexander Solontoy. Personal interview. May 8, 2008.

<sup>351</sup> Patrick Cockburn “Thousands Battle Police as Protesters Demand Resignation of Ukrainian Leader” The Independent (London) March 10, 2001; Shevchenko (2003)

<sup>352</sup> Shevchenko (2003). The student survived and continued as a civil society activist.

<sup>353</sup> Igor Masov. Personal interview. August 9, 2009.

stations.<sup>354</sup> One media witness recalled that the police units “were not looking for specific people from police videos- they just grabbed everyone.”<sup>355</sup> Overall, about 200 individuals were arrested.<sup>356</sup>

Ultimately, the events of March 9<sup>th</sup> 2001 revealed that Ukraine’s police forces, if challenged, would comply with orders to engage in repression. Significantly, military officers interviewed about the Ukraine without Kuchma protests recall little about the events, dismissing them as relatively minor<sup>357</sup> Another did concede that by 2001, “there was more and more frustration in Ukraine – if the opposition had worked a little harder at that point, they could have done better...”<sup>358</sup> Few discussed openly – much less supported – the demonstrations.

### ***Exposing Regime Illegitimacy***

Although the Kuchma regime was clearly unpopular in 2001, the revelation of the Gongadze tapes did not create the event that resonated deeply with Ukraine’s security forces.<sup>359</sup> Even within the broader Ukrainian public, polls reported that only 25% of the population believed that Kuchma should address "cassette scandal" by resigning and calling a presidential election: another 24% preferred that Kuchma settle the conflict via

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<sup>354</sup> Shevchenko (2003)

<sup>355</sup> Shevchenko (2003)

<sup>356</sup> Shevchenko (2003)

<sup>357</sup> Colonel, Ukrainian Army. Telephone interview. August 8, 2008.

<sup>358</sup> Coordinator, Association of Ukrainian officers. Personal interview. August 6, 2008.

<sup>359</sup> Public opinion polls taken at the time of the protests revealed the extent of Kuchma’s unpopularity - newspaper Ukrayina Moloda reported on March 16<sup>th</sup> that only 6.1 per cent of Ukrainians would vote for President Leonid Kuchma if presidential elections had been heldThe poll was conducted between 26 February and 7 March among 2,037 people by the Ukrainian Centre for Political and Economic Research.

talks with the opposition and 12% said they wished Kuchma would ignore the scandal entirely.<sup>360</sup>

While the incident sparked outrage among many within the media, opposition, and civil society groups, for those individuals within Ukraine's security institutions, the Gongadze case was either unpersuasive or irrelevant. One military colonel interviewed suggested that the CIA was likely behind the tapes.<sup>361</sup> Another said that while he acknowledged it was probably true that Kuchma was behind the tapes, the protests were inappropriate as "there is no clear evidence that it was done by Kuchma – without any – according to our laws, you cannot claim that these people are responsible for a crime."<sup>362</sup> A third who claimed not to have heard of the UBK campaign until after 2004 said that "officers think about their business, not politics- we were limited not only by this perception, but also by absence of information about what is going on outside the military organization."<sup>363</sup>

For those in the SBU, the issue certainly didn't appear significant enough to warrant risking the potential costs of defection. Alexander Malikov, a former SBU agent who joined opposition forces in the 1990s but maintained friendships with key SBU leaders, argued that:

In 2001, it was not their business. It was always focused on the killing of Gongadze. Journalists, they cared - these guys, not as much. Why should you put your nose out? They didn't see it as their business until 2004, when they saw Kuchma go too far. Then they saw the threat personally.<sup>364</sup>

As a primary catalyst for the campaign, the Gongadze case was at the forefront of its identity even as broader social grievances motivated some to take to the streets. Lutsenko

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<sup>360</sup> "Polls Say 25 Percent of Ukrainians Want Kuchma To Resign" *Moscow Interfax* 4/3/01

<sup>361</sup> Colonel, Ukrainian Army. Personal interview. August 8, 2008.

<sup>362</sup> Colonel, Ukrainian Air Force. Telephone interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>363</sup> Colonel, Ukrainian Army. Telephone interview. August 8, 2008.

<sup>364</sup> Officer, SBU (former). Personal interview. August 5, 2008.

recalls the delicate balance between the various foundations of the campaign, noting that “when people came out to the square, we would tell them about the Gongadze case and the Melnychenko tapes. But they would tell us that they cannot provide education for their children and did not get their pensions. They were there for social reasons. They were fed up.”<sup>365</sup> While social and political issues were sometimes addressed by challengers – including proposals for the “revamping of the whole [political] system” the Gongadze scandal remained a focal theme of the protests.<sup>366</sup>

Pora organizers later noted the problem of messaging, and drew explicit lessons during their 2004 campaign. Activist Olexsiy Tolkachov later noted that stove-piped coordination of the protests seemed to limit challengers’ ability to deliver anti-Kuchma messages that would resonate with average Ukrainians, recalling “everything was through the politicians - the problem was that only intellectual groups were engaged in the campaign – demanding that the government, ‘give back Giorgi...’”<sup>367</sup> Although politicians such as Moroz had assumed that more Ukrainians would take to the streets, “normal people didn’t feel that this demand was a reason to leave businesses, couldn’t find common language with wider society.”<sup>368</sup> Challengers’ inability to translate the Gongadze issue into a crisis of legitimacy within the security forces meant that few were motivated by conviction to defect from the regime.

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<sup>365</sup> Yuriy Lutsenko, Shevchenko (2003)

<sup>366</sup> For example, emotional outpourings such as candlelight ceremonies and photographs of Gongadze displayed tent city’s center, heaped with flowers focused primarily on the journalist’s murder. Patrick Cockburn “Police Tear Down Tent City to End Protests in Moscow” March 2, 2001

<sup>367</sup> Olexsiy Tolkachov (Black Pora) Personal interview, August 6, 2008.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

### ***Establishing Challenger Legitimacy***

Opposition forces were also unsuccessful in establishing their own legitimacy in 2000/2001. Police and military perceptions of the participants of the event were almost universally negative, with criticism covering on the behavior and motivations, and composition of their political and civic coalition.

Part of the problem was a common view that, in the words of one military colonel, the events represented “just political games.”<sup>369</sup> Noting the deep popular cynicism surrounding both Kuchma and – notably – the opposition, the Canadian paper *The Globe and Mail* reported that only 19% of Ukrainian citizens polled believed that Alexander Moroz, the Socialist Party opposition leader who released the Kuchma tapes, had honest motives for doing so, and that two-thirds believed that he was, in the words of the journalist, “motivated by political or personal ambitions or desire for revenge, or was manipulated by a shadowy outside force.”<sup>370</sup> In his public statements surrounding the protests, Kuchma explicitly played on this issue, piously lamenting, for example, that “some representatives of this political elite are doing their best to seize power. So rather than caring about themselves, the elite should care about Ukraine.”<sup>371</sup> The charges appear to have stuck, and portrayals of the elite-driven opposition appeared in Western accounts of the events.<sup>372</sup> Participants, too, complained about

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<sup>369</sup> Colonel, Ukrainian Army. Telephone interview. August 8, 2008.

<sup>370</sup> “Popular cynicism benefits Kuchma; Ukrainians shrug off official corruption “ *The Globe and Mail* (Canada) 1/26/01

<sup>371</sup> “Sunday ‘Ukrainian leader slams political elite, urges “evolutionary” union of churches’ *Ukrainian Television First Programme* 3/25/01

<sup>372</sup> Kiev-based political analyst Markian Bilynsky, cited by *The Globe and Mail* supported the view that the events largely represented an elite phenomenon, observing that “it hasn’t ignited a light in society yet. The crisis is only among the elite. . . . Nobody has been able to galvanize a broad spectrum of society.” *Globe and Mail*

the “top down” approach of the actions, where all messaging “went from the upstairs to the downstairs.”<sup>373</sup>

If events were skeptically perceived to be primarily elite-driven, crowds gathering on the streets were in turn viewed as pawns of a political game. Even within the civil society institutions that opposed Kuchma, Journalist Lavrentiy Malazoniya, a friend of Gongadze’s who had been on the scene when his decapitated body was found, said of the protesting crowds that “I felt sorry for them, they were simply used... I did the right thing by not participating in the actions.”<sup>374</sup> Many within the security forces similarly doubted the depth and sincerity of challengers’ convictions: One Berkut officer interviewed later stated that “if people don’t want to work, but prefer to stay downtown in a tent city, that is their problem...All I see is a person with nothing to do.”<sup>375</sup>

When information was leaked, it was shared with individuals with whom security force members felt a certain degree of camaraderie. Noting that police and SBU officers tended to come to him, rather than others with information, Mykhaylo Svystovych believes that it was a positive perceptions that led them to share information. As he recalls the twenty or so occasions in which he was leaked information, he “knew some people in forces. All those forces liked me – I had an angelic face at that time – would come up to me, take me aside, give me information.”<sup>376</sup>

Politically, the coalition was successfully portrayed by the regime as a radical alliance of left and right.<sup>377</sup> Scholars have noted that such centrist politicians as prime minister Victor

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<sup>373</sup> Oleksiy Tolkachov. Personal interview, August 6, 2008.

<sup>374</sup> Shevchenko (2003)

<sup>375</sup> He further asserted his belief that many of the tent city residents were paid by the opposition, making participation “like a job for them.” *Andriy Chaban Berkut, Face of Protest*

<sup>376</sup> Mykhaylo Svystovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>377</sup> The political leadership of the campaign was not perceived as representative of the broader population. Although the cooperation between socialist and the nationalist parties did offer a coalition of both right and

Yuschenko, who was prime minister at the time, were notably absent from and even critical of the 2000/2001 coalition.<sup>378</sup> While his position itself was influential, the content of Yuschenko's criticism further undermined the opposition's claim to popular legitimacy. In a February 2001 joint statement with Kuchma, Yuschenko denounced the movement leadership as egotists attempting to consolidate political power. He further accused organizers of using radical "national socialist" tactics to "set off mob rule" in the country "by using flagrant provocation and to compel the authorities to use force," putting the "very existence of Ukraine, its territorial integrity and social peace at stake."<sup>379</sup>

The inclusion of (UNSO) whose members had participated in anti-Russian fighting in Chechnya, Abkhazia, and the Balkans, contributed heavily to the radical profile of the movement.<sup>380</sup> UNSO represented a wild card that arguably undermined the efforts of other organizers to develop positive relationships with police forces. For example, student participants recall that police in Kiev "responded very negatively to young demonstrators offering them flowers because before that, the mature crowd was attacking them. In the morning they were beaten by the UNSO group, and then in the afternoon the young people came to give them flowers."<sup>381</sup> During March 9<sup>th</sup>, Lutsenko recalls, it was the "UNSO boys" that allowed themselves to be provoked... and this was their mistake.<sup>382</sup>

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leftist parties Ukraine's opposition calls on public "to overthrow" President KuchmaText of report in English by Russian news agency Interfax

Kiev, 9 March:

<sup>378</sup> See Paul D'Aneiri (2006)

<sup>379</sup> Patrick Tyler "In Mid-Crisis, Ukraine President Lashes Out at Opposition" *The Economist* 2/17/01 February 17, 2001

<sup>380</sup> Alexander Solontoy, who was later active in student organizing during the Orange Revolution, recalls that during his first visits to the tent city, he was greeted by menacing looking UNSO guards who would not let him enter. Only after reciting a creed "Honor to the Nation....Death to the enemies" was he permitted to enter, leaving his friend, also undergraduate was waiting outside, asking "what the hell was that?" Alexander Solontoy. Personal interview. May 8, 2008.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid.

<sup>382</sup> Shevchenko (2003)

Characterizations of opposition protesters as drugged, wild-eyed mobs severely undermined the nonviolent image that part of the leadership had attempted to cultivate.<sup>383</sup> As the protests continued, the composition of the crowds elicited increasing concern within law enforcement authorities.<sup>384</sup> Such activities led observers to question the efficacy of the campaign itself, particularly as the movement was increasingly denigrated by regime officials and media sources who “tried to say it was just an adventure, not a ‘system of protest.’”<sup>385</sup>

The gulf between the protesters and police forces widened as clashes escalated over the course of March 9<sup>th</sup>. Lutsenko recalled later that after initial confrontations with police forces at Shevchenko square, “a certain line had been crossed. People were ready for revenge after being treated that way, like an enemy. Eventually, they did become an enemy. They felt like they were facing the enemy.”<sup>386</sup> This sentiment, and the actions that proceeded from it, in turn influenced police perceptions of the protesters.<sup>387</sup> Once civilians were believed by police to be either drunk or high, it likely became far easier to use force against them than it would have had they been seen as sober peers. Organizers also recognized afterwards that disorder and violence also carried negative implications for their relationships with the military. Svystovych later acknowledged that the clashes with the police on March 9th meant that the army, like much of the rest of the Ukrainian population,

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<sup>383</sup> Some organizers, for example, had explicitly attempted a month earlier to draw parallels between their own movement and Czechoslovakia's 1989 Velvet Revolution. Tom Warner, “Mired in scandal, Leonid Kuchma targeted by street protests; Ukrainians compare their movement to Czechoslovakia's 1989 Velvet Revolution” *The Globe and Mail*, 2/12/01

<sup>384</sup> Police Chief Alexander Savchenko recalls watching the evolving events, observing that “first it was just the tents...then they started to burn effigies, then Molotov cocktails were thrown, and it went on it began to look like an orgy or wild party.” He remembers wondering, “what are you doing, boys? You are starting to attract people who shouldn't be among you.” Alexander Savchenko, in Shevchenko (2003)

<sup>385</sup> Omelyan Omylchenko. 1+1 journalist. Personal interview. August 12, 2008.

<sup>386</sup> Yuriy Lutsenko, in Andriy Shevchenko, “Oblychchia Protestu” (Face of Protest) TV documentary 2003

<sup>387</sup> One officer recalled afterwards that “people attacking us had blood on their heads but they still came down on us with wild eyes. It amazed me. Why, if you have been injured, why not calm down and go home? Usually this kind of excitement is caused by alcohol or drugs.” Interior Ministry Officer, Shevchenko (2003)

believed that after this point, the demonstrators “could not be defended...they were judging our actions.”<sup>388</sup>

Overall, in striking contrast to the Orange Revolution, it appears that there was little strategic effort to counter the claims made by the authorities or to otherwise establish legitimacy within the police and military forces.<sup>389</sup> Early in the protest, organizer Mykhaylo Svystovych did draft a letter to police officers, calling on them to “join the people.”<sup>390</sup> However, as Svystovych recalls, despite his own suggestions that leaders develop a strategy to “work with” the police, no coherent plan was developed to address the issue. The few statements that were initiated were mired in ineffective public relations capabilities – messages were “weak, and didn’t go out.”<sup>391</sup> Observers also recall that “It was “chaotic – nobody was working strategically at that time.”<sup>392</sup>

### ***Increasing Costs of Repression***

Political figures within the power ministries did incur some costs as a result of both the Gongadze case and the violence of March 9<sup>th</sup>. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, Kuchma dismissed his interior minister Yuriy Kravchenko, who had also been implicated in the Kuchma tapes – his dismissal had been one of the demands of UKB protesters.<sup>393</sup>

However, the costs of repression were not as high as organizers had hoped they would be. UNSO’s Igor Masov, who was arrested and ultimately spent four years in prison in

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<sup>388</sup> Mykhaylo Svystovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008; Shevchenko, (2003)

<sup>389</sup> BBC Summary of World Broadcasts 1/26/01. Protesters in Kiev demand resignation of president, interior minister before or during the 2000/2001 protests, beyond sporadic appeals by crowds to side with the “people.”

<sup>390</sup> Mykhaylo Svystovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>392</sup> Officer, SBU (former). Personal interview. August 5, 2008.

<sup>393</sup> The move did not lead to liberalization of the Ministry, however – Kavchenko was replaced by Yuri Smirnov, Chief of Kiev police and deputy internal affairs minister, described as “hawkish” by international news sources. Olena Horodetska “Key Ukrainian Minister Fired to Quell Criticism” *Reuters*, 2/37/01

conjunction with his role in the March 9<sup>th</sup> events, bemoaned the lack of popular uprising in response to his and others' arrests, recalling that "we expected that more people would protest."<sup>394</sup> Participants of the tent city and demonstrations acknowledge that their actions likely played a role in diminishing popular outrage at repression. In addition to alienating police, disorder and hostility within the ranks of demonstrators also dissuaded some average citizens who might otherwise have joined. One observer explained that this was not due to fear of government repression, but a rejection of the tactics used. "Ukrainians have been attacked before [by the government], but usually even more will come after to protect against repression. This time, they just didn't want to be associated with that kind of violence."<sup>395</sup> Organizer Svystovic reinforced this point, observing that large parts of the population "would not join us – they judged our actions and disliked them."<sup>396</sup>

Challengers provided the regime with the pretext it needed for repression. Lutsenko, interviewed afterwards for *The Face of Protest*, acknowledged that "we understood that the presence of [challengers'] sticks or rods could be used against us, and later it was used against us."<sup>397</sup> In his version of the events, General Savchenko, who would continue to ascend the ranks of the Interior Ministry after 2001, emphasized both the culpability of the crowd and his personal responsibility for the well-being of his men: "When people began to gather so as to break through our lines, why shouldn't I have shown my strength? Why

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<sup>394</sup> Igor Masov. Personal interview. August 9, 2009.

<sup>395</sup> One participant recalls seeing "proof that people were only ready for nonviolence" noting that many protesters left once violence began. Alexander Solontoy. Personal interview. May 8, 2008.

<sup>396</sup> Mykhaylo Svystovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>397</sup> Yuri Lutsenko, in Shevchenko (2003)

not? I'm obliged to take care of those who are in the police.”<sup>398</sup> Kuchma had justified repression in similar terms.<sup>399</sup>

Media coverage of the events emphasized crowd chaos, rather than the response of the authorities. Labeling the event an “Anti-Kuchma Riot,” *Agence France Press* reported on March 9<sup>th</sup> that “thousands of protesters, some wielding iron bars, attacked” the Presidential Administration building, mentioning that “at least two police officers were seriously hurt, suffering injuries to their heads, legs and hands.”<sup>400</sup> Television news clips from March 9<sup>th</sup> also revealed the volatility of the crowds and the fear on the faces of some police officers.<sup>401</sup> Such coverage made it more difficult to evoke “outrage” amongst potential allies. Kuchma defended the decision, arguing that “I believe that it was an absolutely correct decision,” spoke of the need to assert “authority” in Kiev and attempting to pointed out that while he did not oppose the tent city on principle, the structures needed to be restricted to areas approved by the government.<sup>402</sup>

The strategic use of members of Parliament to attract media attention was initiated in 2000/2001 but would not become a fully developed tool until the run-up to the 2004 Orange Revolution. Organizers in 2001 did attempt “to get as many MPs involved as possible” and ultimately were able to include about twenty in their efforts.<sup>403</sup> Although

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<sup>398</sup> Alexander Savchenko, in Shevchenko, (2003)

<sup>399</sup> Kuchma stated on March 1<sup>st</sup> after the tent city was destroyed that “It was an absolutely correct decision by the authorities to show that they are the authorities, and everybody should remember that for the future.”

Patrick Cockburn “Police Tear Down Tent City to End Protests in Kiev” *The Independent*, 3/2/01

<sup>400</sup> “AFP Photographer Witnesses Anti-Kuchma Riot in Front of Ukraine Presidency *Paris AFP* 3/9/01. The language and tone of the article offers a striking contrast to the coverage of the March 1<sup>st</sup> events just over a week earlier, when the AFP quoted Socialist Party officials reporting that the police had “resorted to strong-arm tactics, beating several protesters who sought to continue their six-week-long peaceful protest in defiance of a court order...” “Ukraine Police Use 'Strong-Arm Tactics' To Break Up Anti-Kuchma Demonstration” *Paris AFP* March 1, 2001

<sup>401</sup> Shevchenko (2003).

<sup>402</sup> “Decision to demolish tent camp “absolutely correct” --President Kuchma” Ukrainian news agency *Ukrayinski Novyny* March 1, 2001 (Accessed via World News connection.)

<sup>403</sup> Mykhaylo Systovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

organizers objectives were to maintain a presence of between three and five members of parliament at any given time, MPs were ultimately of limited utility because they “didn’t know how to do it – protest was very new to them...sometimes they would just stop by, greet us, and then continue walking”<sup>404</sup> Conversations with General Savchenko appear to have reinforced the importance of maintaining a high profile and including public figures: the police official reportedly told Chemerys during the tent city, that although they might crack down on the demonstrators, “we won’t arrest you because it would just make for good PR for you.”<sup>405</sup>

Some media outlets sympathetic to the opposition did play an active role in attempting to shed light on those committing acts of repression. Yevhen Hlibovytsky, an independent journalist for the TV took his cameras to the train station and other areas where arrests and beatings were taking place. He later related the incident, recalling that

Where the cameras appeared, the police disappeared, they just stopped doing it. They were afraid of publicity. They were afraid of the light. Like vampires who are afraid of the light, the police fled from the TV camera lights. They realized something was wrong, something was out of place. But they had been given an order they had to obey.<sup>406</sup>

Similarly, coverage of the attacks on the unarmed woman did appear to have shocked even the more skeptical of Ukrainian viewers.<sup>407</sup> However, while accounts of the events were cited in the Ukrainian press, they were overshadowed in the public eye by the chaos that had defined the events of March 9<sup>th</sup>.

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<sup>404</sup> Ibid. Taras Steskiv was mentioned as a notable exception.

<sup>405</sup> Volodymyr Chemerys. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>406</sup> Shevchenko (2003).

<sup>407</sup> Ivanna Volochiy. Personal interview. August 5, 2008.

### ***Mitigating Costs of Accommodation***

There do not seem to have been significant efforts undertaken by challengers to reduce the costs of loyalty shifts or outright defection. Retired military officers recall potential costs involved even in signaling discontent with the status quo. As one later observed, “generally, there was little people could say – they couldn’t talk about it. Even mentioning that you oppose Kuchma- you could lose your job.”<sup>408</sup> Another colonel who later supported the Orange Revolution recalls feeling similarly constrained in 2001: “if you have even this feeling that not everything is very good, you can retire and then say everything you want. If you are military, you have to follow orders.”<sup>409</sup> Challenger tactics failed to contribute to a “comfort zone” in which loyalty shifts were more likely to occur.

The events of March 9<sup>th</sup> increased perceived costs of inaction for police forces, who were concerned about their personal safety at the hands of a mob. Contributing to the initial tension was ambiguity before the events about the intentions of the demonstrators. Although some leaders, such as Chemerys, and also the socialists, were determined that the crowd would only demonstrate their presence, Volodymyr Filekno had stated on a television program the previous night that the National Salvation Front would not allow Kuchma to reach the monument.<sup>410</sup> Filenko’s statements appeared to have reinforced a prevailing belief within the police that demonstrators were set on blocking Kuchma’s access to the monument, a step that was perceived as a red line for those in the police forces.<sup>411</sup> One Berkut officer, recalling his position, stated afterwards that “I was

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<sup>408</sup> Coordinator, Association of Ukrainian officers. Personal interview. August 6, 2008.

<sup>409</sup> Colonel, Ukrainian Air Force. Telephone interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>410</sup> Mykhaylo Svystovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>411</sup> Interior Ministry officer, interviewed in Shevchenko (2003)

determined not to allow disorder. If we had allowed them to pass...I would have set an example for my troops. Let's not get in the way, let them go one... What would that have led to? I think the consequences would have been terrible.”<sup>412</sup>

Assessing the situation, those in uniform perceived a direct danger to their personal security and to that of their colleagues. One officer who later expressed regret about the repression, when asked about his experiences during March 9<sup>th</sup>, alluded to the Molotov cocktails near the police lines, and observed that “the wind was blowing on us and the sun was shining in our eyes. When the crowd appeared there was a strong smell of gasoline. I had the feeling we weren't going to get out of there...”<sup>413</sup> A Berkut officer similarly recounted an incident in which he allegedly had to rescue a junior officer close to him who was pummeled by the crowds:

We were showered with rocks. By that time some of us had broken shields and helmets. Next to me was a young policeman who had only been at work for a few months. He wasn't careful and they pulled him into the crowd. They ripped off his helmet but his body armor saved him. I went forward, I don't know what I did, if I hit anyone, but I managed to save him. He actually ended up in my arms and we managed to get back to our ranks.

At the helm of the police force, General Savchenko later argued that there was little opportunity to communicate with opposition leaders: “*There was no one to talk to. Walking up to them meant you could be torn to pieces. I do not know who could have done it.*”<sup>414</sup> Independent media reports and from video footage at the time indicates there was a realistic threat to those police officers confronting the crowds. *The Guardian*, for example, reported

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<sup>412</sup> Berkut officer, interviewed in Shevchenko (2003)

<sup>413</sup> Officer, Interior Ministry, Shevchenko (2003)

<sup>414</sup> General Savchenko, Shevchenko (2003)

that “protesters with home-made truncheons injured several officers, some seriously... the windows of buses and cars were smashed as the crowd moved through the city.”<sup>415</sup>

Opposition leaders claimed after the events that the violence was initiated by “provocateurs” from police or intelligence services.<sup>416</sup> Later, however Svystovych acknowledged that while there “really were provocations,” attempts to initiate violence “wouldn’t have worked if we didn’t want to fight.”<sup>417</sup> Even those organizers who rejected violence said later that one had to “take into account the mood of the protests. Here people were ready to fight.... Even one match could set it off, for those who would fight.”<sup>418</sup> Some student activists who would later advocate nonviolent approaches during the Orange Revolution were also caught up in the emotional swell of the events. Alexander Solontoy recalls photos that later emerged of him during the clashes near the Presidential Administration building: “Police were taking the batteries out of their radios and throwing them at us. One hit me, and I picked it up and threw it back. And then I’m thinking – what am I doing? This is no good.”<sup>419</sup> As the demonstrations deteriorated into mob-like conditions, Kiev’s police did not feel confident that the crowds, if left unchecked, would strive to minimize the costs of accommodation by the police.

### ***Demonstrating Likelihood of Success***

Perhaps most significant in determining the decisions made by individuals in uniform was a firm belief that challengers would fail to remove Kuchma from power. Retired

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<sup>415</sup> Amelia Gentleman “Riots against Kuchma rock Kiev” *The Guardian*, March 10, 2001.

<sup>416</sup> “Police provocateurs” *Associated Press* March 12, 2001.

<sup>417</sup> Mykhaylo Svystovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>418</sup> Volodymyr Chemerys. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>419</sup> Alexander Solontoy. Personal interview. May 8, 2008.

military officers recall that many of their colleagues were dismissive of the demonstrations, as they were “positive at the time that protests were going on that nothing would happen.”<sup>420</sup>

Challengers themselves appear to have lacked confidence in their prospects for success. Unable to muster either the numbers they needed to significantly challenge Kuchma’s leadership or the resources to maintain a prolonged struggle, the opposition forces lost a struggle of attrition.<sup>421</sup> As Svystovych has observed, organizers had failed to “plan the action for as long as it went on.”<sup>422</sup> By March, 9<sup>th</sup>, challengers were “out of resources, we didn’t have money or food, groceries, etc… But it was our last stance, our swan song. We understood that we would never win.”<sup>423</sup> Ukraine’s police, military and intelligence services, observing the events, understood as well.

An inability to muster numbers also limited perceptions that challengers were likely to succeed. General Savchenko appears to have been confident of his ability to suppress the protests. The night before the March 9<sup>th</sup> events, during an encounter with organizers in Shevchenko park, Svystovych recalls that the police official “was laughing – he said ‘you will be taken out, nobody will support you. We’ll beat you up - your protest is over.’”<sup>424</sup> Although the following day’s events drew larger crowds than many of the campaign’s previous events – 18,000 in Kiev according to media reports – it was not enough to significantly challenge the police forces gathered in Kiev. In 2004, Kuchma would confidently cite low turnouts in 2001 as evidence that the opposition would be unable to gain traction.<sup>425</sup> Reporting in early March that the “demonstrations against Mr Kuchma

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<sup>420</sup> Coordinator, Association of Ukrainian officers. Personal interview. August 6, 2008.

<sup>421</sup> Noted in D’Aneiri (2006)

<sup>422</sup> Mykhaylo Svystovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid.

<sup>425</sup> See Taras Kuzio “Did Ukraine’s Security Service Really Prevent Bloodshed During the Orange Revolution?” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 2, Issue 16 (January 24, 2005)

have been small,” the *New York Times* cited a local analyst’s observation that Ukrainian citizens were “so alienated from the government that they don’t even want to protest against it,” and also reported that fear of professional repercussions may have deterred other potential participants.<sup>426</sup>

From the sidelines, military officers identified the lack of clear leadership within the opposition as a key weakness of the opposition forces. A retired colonel recalls that as he watched the events, it became clear that he, and more generally the Ukrainian people... “did not see a leader that they could follow. On a personal level, if people are trying to lead me somewhere and they don’t agree [with each other], there is no way I will follow them.”<sup>427</sup> Another retired colonel, now at Kiev’s Razumkov Center, also emphasized his belief that “if you had had a unified Ukrainian opposition in 2001, you could have had a revolution in 2001” adding that while there was some political momentum against Kuchma, “it was divided. They were declaring coalitions, but they were ineffective.”<sup>428</sup>

### ***Conclusion: Lessons Learned***

Challengers’ successes in 2004 were in large part born of the failures of 2001. As opposition and civil society leaders prepared for the 2004 elections, they reflected on their previous shortcomings. One of the primary architects of the protests later noted that:

In 2002 and 2003 we carried out careful analysis of the reasons for failures of previous protests, and the major reasons were: the small number of people and the aggressive nature of such events. So our conclusion was that we needed to get out as many people as possible and to make sure that the protests would not be aggressive. We realized that no *milizia* – no

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<sup>426</sup>Gennadiy Pochtar, the director of the Promedia Information and Press Centre in Kiev, cited in Patrick Cockburn “Police Tear Down Tent City to End Protests in Kiev” *The Independent*, March 2, 2001.

<sup>427</sup> Coordinator, Association of Ukrainian officers. Personal interview. August 6, 2008.

<sup>428</sup> Col Mykola Sungurovsky. Personal interview. June 1, 2005; Paul D’Aneiri has noted that the decision of Yushchenko to remain loyal to Kuchma as an important factor in the failure of the opposition to gain political and popular traction. His February statements condemning the opposition and its tactics also signaled that he would maintain his position within the Kuchma camp. D’Aneiri (2006)

special units – would dare to take up arms against such a huge group of people.<sup>429</sup>

As early as April 2003, therefore, the Our Ukraine leadership had begun to develop a mass strategy in order to challenge the “easily predictable” steps that would be taken by the regime to influence the following year’s presidential elections. An internal memo dated from that month acknowledged that “it will be a game without rules, unprecedented competition of informational, organizational, financial and administrative resources for the regime” and emphasized: “we need allies and at least 500,000 active supporters.”<sup>430</sup>

A key difference then, between 2001 and 2004 was challengers’ ability to draw from a strong base of supporters, both in and beyond the Kiev Region. The persistent efforts of Our Ukraine to reduce fear and mobilize the populace over the course of the campaign helped to develop this network. We had to constantly keep the heat up on the situation,” throughout 2004 recalls Roman Bezsmertny, the campaign’s chief strategist. “We had to keep stirring it because we understood that the people will not come out just like that, they need to get used to idea.”<sup>431</sup> Regional coordinator Taras Stetskiv recalls that “we were trying to prepare people to become real actors, and to get rid of fear. We did this step by step, with many rallies.”<sup>432</sup> Additionally, the activities of civil society organizations such as the civic groups Yellow and Black Pora helped to develop broad social networks that would prove critical once the

The need for internal discipline was another critical lesson drawn from the events of 2001. It had been painfully apparent in 2001 that an aggressive stance would quickly turn the ire of the security forces against challengers: one leader notes that “it was extremely

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<sup>429</sup> Our Ukraine parliamentarian. Personal interview. June 7, 2005.

<sup>430</sup> Our Ukraine internal memo, dated 4 April 2003. Given to author June 2005 by Voldomor Filenko and Taras Stetskiv

<sup>431</sup> Yana Dlugy "Behind Ukraine's revolution: careful preparations" *Agence France Presse* February 14, 2005.

<sup>432</sup> Volodymyr Filenko. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

important that we never, ever provoked them with aggression. Our actions were very peaceful. We learned the bitter lessons of 2001.”<sup>433</sup> One PORA coordinator similarly observed that they had learned the nonviolent tactics allowed challengers to act on “equal terms with the state authorities. If we were not violent, we could compete. If we were violent, they could have resorted to force. This was the only efficient strategy within the current environment.”<sup>434</sup> Svystovych also noted that this point was one of the issues that Serbian former Otpor activists made clear their trainings prior to the “Orange Revolution.”<sup>435</sup> Planning for crowd control mechanisms thus proved particularly important: one major piece of advice given by an Our Ukraine leader offers to future protest planners is that “any spontaneous outburst of the people’s anger should in any case be pre-organized. If you do not organize protests of people, they can just lead to thoughtless riots.”<sup>436</sup>

Finally, a strategic approach to communication with and outreach to Ukraine’s security forces offered another key difference between 2001 and 2004. Challengers had learned after the failures of 2001 that comprehension of the preferences and leanings of the security forces would help them to craft a successful strategy. Opposition leaders thus reached out to the families, communities, former colleagues, and current members of security forces themselves in order to “understand their moods.”<sup>437</sup> As the contentious elections approached, these efforts became more targeted as organizers worked to interact with forces near Kiev.<sup>438</sup> As they pursued these contacts, challengers in 2004 had, unlike the organizers of the Ukraine Without Kuchma protests, developed new channels of

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<sup>433</sup> Ibid. In March 2000, Ukraine Without Kuchma protests culminated in a violent clash between demonstrators and the police force.

<sup>434</sup> Yevhen Zolotaryov. Personal interview. May 30, 2005.

<sup>435</sup> Mykhaylo Svystovych. Personal interview. August 7, 2008.

<sup>436</sup> Taras Stetskiv. Personal interview. June 10, 2005.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid.

communication that would prove useful both in convincing security forces of their relative legitimacy and of altering the calculus of cost surrounding potential loyalty shifts

## **CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND ADDITIONAL EPISODES**

### **Section 1: Conclusions from Serbia and Ukraine**

#### ***Introduction***

This study has explored the proposition that challengers able to meet the five strategic objectives presented in Chapter 1 are more likely to elicit security force loyalty shifts than those who did not. Case study analysis of episodes of successful and unsuccessful challenges in Serbia and Ukraine sheds light on how each objective influences security force loyalty shifts. By comparing and contrasting the various episodes of protest in Serbia and Ukraine, this section will review key findings from the case studies to discuss the relative significance of the strategic objectives, consider how they interrelate, and identify those actions and features of challengers that corresponded to success or failure.

Considerations of relative legitimacy appear to have influenced some, but not all, individuals in the Ukrainian and Serbian security forces. Challengers able to contribute to or exploit advantages in relative legitimacy benefited from a range of individual loyalty shifts, including slowed or halted obedience levels, leaks and other assistance, and occasional public defections. These outcomes offered challengers expanded political space in which to operate and strengthen their position. Foot dragging on arrests or reports left unsubmitted reduced both regime capacity to target activists, while information leaked by sympathetic members of the security forces helped challengers to implement the tactics necessary to avoid and to raise the costs of repression. Some shifts based on conviction were additionally significant because they ricocheted beyond the

individual loyalty shift. Those who made their convictions publicly known in turn influenced colleagues' perceptions of challengers' likelihoods of success.

Calculations of costs also played a role by constraining the choices available to members of the security forces. Costs of repression, when significant, sometimes deterred even those who did not feel that the opposition was pursuing a legitimate cause, or cared little about relative legitimacy. On the other hand, high costs of loyalty shifts dissuaded individuals in the security forces in both countries from disobeying orders or assisting challengers even when they were sympathetic to their cause. When challengers were unable to create a comfort zone in which disobedience or defections became feasible, such shifts were unlikely to occur.

Ultimately, as other scholars have noted, both loyalty shifts of colleagues and perceptions about challengers' viability fed into security forces' perceptions of the likelihood that challengers would succeed in assuming power. When those motivated by conviction or with lower barriers to defection began to shift loyalty and colleagues observed their actions, those colleagues recalibrated their perceptions of challengers' likelihood of assuming power.

One common thread running throughout the examples of success in both Serbia and Ukraine was the ability of challengers to effect a "disruption" of the status quo. In this context, disruption might best be understood as the challengers' ability to significantly alter the landscape in which decisions were made through changing perceptions of the regime and its opponents, altering constraints to disobedience and obedience, and making it appear more likely that government leadership would be changing hands. By disrupting the status quo in each of these areas, challengers were able to undermine

established assumptions and have an impact on the patterns of behavior within the security forces.

### ***Regime Legitimacy***

In Serbia and Ukraine, perceptions of regime illegitimacy framed the struggle for many already-disillusioned members of the security forces, reducing enthusiasm for implementing regime imperatives. Crises in legitimacy also occasionally spurred sufficient moral indignation to precipitate individual defections and assistance to challengers despite potential costs.

Declining regime legitimacy – and challenger exploitation of key vulnerabilities – contributed to shifts in the moral landscape in which the struggle took place. This translated into foot-dragging, or reluctance to obey orders. Things left undone – reports not filed, acts of defiance overlooked, information kept quiet – helped provide activists with the space they needed to develop and strengthen their ranks. Quiet dereliction of duty also weakened regimes’ capacity for repression. Neither Milosevic nor Kuchma was adequately warned of the likely scale of the demonstrations that toppled them, and lack of information in the run-up to October 5<sup>th</sup> was explicitly cited as a critical problem by the higher ranks of the Serbian Interior Ministry.

As questions about legitimacy crescendoed post-election in 2000 in Serbia and 2004 in Ukraine, uncertainty about constitutional authority created hesitation for some within the security forces about the legitimacy of actual or potential orders to engage in repression. Police officers in Serbia report that their colleagues failed to stop the columns streaming into Belgrade in part because they knew that Milosevic, in truth, had lost the elections. In

Ukraine, police officers reported genuine confusion about the legitimate chain of command after the second round of elections.

Evaluations of regime legitimacy also, in some instances, influenced individual thresholds for tolerance of the risks involved in taking a stance. In more dramatic examples, decline in regime legitimacy appears to have prompted some individuals to openly take an ethical stance against the status quo. This dynamic is easier to identify in the 2004 Orange Revolution, where defections took place over a longer period of time. Of most interest are those cases in which people were willing to take a stand at the risk of costs incurred by regime reprisals. The SBU officers who spoke up in early September to support the opposition may have seen the writing on the wall, but at that point the outcome of the struggle was far from predetermined. In Western Ukraine General Kutsin's colleagues were aware of the possible consequences of his early statement on the elections and waited with concern for the official Ministry response. Those military and police officers willing to take stand on the Maidan or on Channel 5 reported that they were afraid, but that faith drove them to take the risk. In Serbia, Perisic's open pledge to students in 1996 that the VJ would not be used against them was arguably influenced by his dissatisfaction with the status quo under Milosevic.

In both successful cases, disruption depended on the ability of challengers to identify and exploit regime failings that were relevant to members of the security institutions they were targeting. Successful cases in Serbia and Ukraine feature factors exogenous to challenger strategy – a failed war in Serbia and an unfortunate choice of successor in Ukraine – that challengers developed into campaign messages targeted a security force audience. In Serbia, Otpor's efforts to exploit the issue of recent losses in Kosovo

recognized existing tensions between Milosevic and the security forces about a topic particularly sensitive for both police and army, since both had been called to serve on the grounds that the retention of Kosovo within Serbian borders was a historic right and vital to the national interest. In the Ukrainian elections of 2004, consistent rhetorical references to Yanukovic's criminal past by Our Ukraine and parallel efforts by members of civil society similarly drove a wedge between law enforcement bodies and the would-be Kuchma successor.

Successful challengers were also able to generate and leverage critical events that disrupted the status quo and raised moral decision points for security forces. As has been widely noted, exposure of regime attempts to mask electoral losses with fraud factored significantly into legitimacy crises in both Serbia of 2000 and in Ukraine of 2004.<sup>1</sup> Disruption of regime legitimacy was also partially achieved during the Serbian protests of 1996-1997, when election fraud at the local level provided context for a meeting between student activists and General Perisic in which the army chief of staff referenced constitutional principles and commented that both students and the military were "above politics."

When regimes had generally strong levels of legitimacy, on the other hand, it was more difficult to persuade security forces to shift loyalties. In Serbia in 1991, the military and interior ministry appeared, for the most part, to be comfortable with Milosevic. In the wake of a resounding electoral victory for the leadership, opposition grievances about media freedom gained little traction.

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<sup>1</sup>In successful cases, challengers played an important role both by working to provide accurate alternative vote counts and by bringing the issue to the forefront of public consciousness. See, for example, Michael McFaul "*Transitions from Postcommunism*" *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 16, Number 3, July 2005.

But general dissatisfaction alone did not appear to be enough to inspire individuals in the security forces to significantly lower their thresholds for risk. Even when regimes in power had generally poor levels of legitimacy within the security forces, challengers unable to create a moral “critical event” that disrupted the status quo were less successful in motivating potential risk-taking. In Ukraine in 2001, for example, Kuchma had abysmal popular approval ratings and frustration existed within the security forces because of poor pay and corruption. However, while the Gongadze affair sparked outrage for many within Ukrainian NGO communities and media outlets, individuals in the security forces were not particularly motivated to send signals or take steps that might initiate a change in the status quo.

### ***Challenger Legitimacy***

In Ukraine and Serbia, successful challengers were able to offer security forces an attractive alternative to the status quo, reframing the way that they perceived the struggle, and sometimes even inspiring active assistance.

As evidenced in Serbia of 2000 and Ukraine of 2004, it was not necessary to establish legitimacy with *all* members of security forces.<sup>2</sup> Some arguably remained unconvinced or uninterested in questions of legitimacy. In Serbia, the hardened members of JSO seemed to care little about the degree to which the objectives, tactics and composition of challengers were personally compelling. On the other hand, the Special Antiterrorist Unit SAJ already included opposition sympathizers by the time of October 5<sup>th</sup>, and when the time came for a standoff against civilians at the RTS station, JSO recognized that it no longer had the support of SAJ. In Ukraine, on the other hand, regional identities were a

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Katz, “Democratic revolutions: why some succeed, why others fail.” *World Affairs* Winter 2004.

primary differentiating factor. It was far more difficult for challengers to establish positive relationships with security forces from eastern Ukraine than it was in the west and in Kiev. Because challengers decided to focus their efforts in Kiev, where there was a greater degree of sympathy for their activities, they had more space to strengthen their operations before running up against forces from the east. For those from the east, unconvinced by legitimacy issues, utilitarian considerations such as the various costs and the probability of challenger success were at the fore. However, even these calculations were influenced by the decisions of others made on the grounds of relative legitimacy.

Once challengers established legitimacy with a given soldier, police officer or unit, they were more likely both to avoid repression and to be successful in inspiring active subverting behavior assistance. This factor appears to have influenced the degree to which some in the security forces were willing to continue fully complying with orders to engage in repression. In Serbia, Otpor began to receive better treatment at the hands of local police officers, which translated into shorter arrests and cordial interactions after establishing their legitimacy during a series of interactions over the course of 2000. During the Orange Revolution, efforts to reach out to Interior Ministry Academy students yielded mass defections of cadets: a dramatically different outcome than in 2000, when students from the same academy reportedly participated in raids on the Ukraine Without Kuchma tent city.

Perceptions of challenger legitimacy also sometimes prompted active assistance. Leaks of information to trusted members of the opposition also became increasingly prevalent in both Ukraine and Serbia as challengers made strategic efforts to engage members of the police, military, and intelligence services. Information included tips about potentially

imminent crackdowns and suggestions for defensive and deterrent measures, including moving participants to safer areas as well as massing additional demonstrators in areas of concern to Raise thecosts of repression. Tipsters also provided information on prevailing sentiments within their units, tactically useful for challengers as they planned their course of action.

On the other hand, when police officers felt alienated by the objectives or tactics of the movement, they were more likely consider crackdowns as justified, and offered little information to assist challengers. While Ukrainian challengers were unable to establish legitimacy with police and intelligence forces in 2001, the few leaks of actionable information were shared with individuals with whom police officers had already had positive interactions. In Serbia in1996, it was likely significant that the meeting with Perisic occurred with students, rather than with political opposition leaders. Moreover, tips about potential crackdowns were passed along to student leaders rather than to the politicians.

Both the failed and successful episodes in Serbia and Ukraine provide evidence of the importance of offering a candidate and promoting an agenda palatable to security forces. In Serbia, Kostunica was chosen by the DOS coalition with this consideration in mind – earlier opposition leaders such as Draskovic had failed to garner support from security forces. Similarly, Our Ukraine's ability to offer a palatable alternative to the status quo in the form of Victor Yushchenko presented a framework for the struggle which was dramatically different from the right-left coalition of 2001, which Kuchma had successfully portrayed as radical.

### ***Costs of Repression***

When challengers were able to significantly raise the costs of repression and make relevant members of the security forces aware of these costs, they contributed to the constraints felt by decision-makers contemplating repressive responses. Because the challengers in the cases studied were primarily nonviolent, deterrence was not, for the most part, based on threats of physical harm. Rather, the principal mechanisms of raising costs of repression appeared to be through tapping into the community bonds of security force members, exposing perpetrators of injustice, or leveraging exogenous factors – such as legal systems or external support – to target the interests of an individual decision-maker. Costs of repression did seem to influence the outcome of events by prompting decision-makers to try to avoid responsibility for their actions, diluting the potency of the chain of command.

Increased costs of repression helped constrain the actions of those who might otherwise be inclined to suppress dissent. At the top of the power ministries' chains of command, concerns about the individual costs to those who ordered repression caused individuals to avoid responsibility for such commands. A desire to avoid accountability led to considerable ambiguity surrounding commands – for example the use of verbal, rather than written orders and the use of informal rather than official procedures – which allowed for a greater margin for error throughout the chain of command. This both reduced the legitimacy of the orders and increased plausible deniability—lowering costs of disobedience – for those engaging in foot dragging or disobedience. Examples occurred in both Serbia in 2000 and Ukraine in 2004. In Serbia, although Milosevic reportedly attempted to initiate repressive actions against demonstrators through VJ Chief

of Staff General Pavkovic, Pavkovic's desire to avoid responsibility undermined the integrity of the effort. The resulting ambiguity allegedly yielded an unsuccessful late night attempt at mobilization by Pavkovic's deputy, General Bozidar Delic, which was defied by unit-level commanders amidst lack of explicit orders. In Ukraine, while Yanukovic reportedly urged Kuchma to order Interior Ministry troops to attempt to disperse crowds on the Maidan, Yanukovic appeared unwilling himself to make such an attempt. Instead, orders most likely went through informal channels, leaving officers skeptical of their legitimacy and increasingly willing to disobey.

Throughout the 2000 Serbian campaign, when Otpor's attempts to persuade police officers failed, they increased the costs of repression with rapid response tactics identifying and targeting abusive officers for social ostracization. Some exogenous factors influenced the efficacy of challengers' attempts to raise the costs of repression. Forces most closely interwoven into the social fabric of the community – for example local police forces or soldiers from the region – were more susceptible to social censure as a “cost” than those kept largely separate from society. Similarly, forces brought in from other regions hostile to challengers’ objectives – in the Ukrainian example BARS forces brought from Crimea – were less likely to be constrained by the potential for social censure. From challengers’ perspectives, this argued in favor of developing as geographically broad a support base as possible, so as to gain access to as many communities surrounding security forces as possible.

The degree of outrage provoked by repression – and hence the costs of “backfire” – was to a large extent contingent upon the degree of legitimacy that challengers were able to achieve within the broader population. If they were convincingly portrayed as radical

fringe actors, as was the case in March 1991 in Serbia, there was less likely to be a domestic or international outcry against their repression. Additionally, when permitted, regimes in both Serbia and Ukraine were quite successful in using any indication of challenger violence – even in response to government provocation—to publicly justify acts of repression.

As events unfolded, the sheer numbers of people that were gathered in Kiev and Belgrade intensified the immediate costs of repression. Although participants were nonviolent, their numbers significantly raised the stakes for security forces who recognized that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to disperse the crowds without the use of some force. Awareness of the costs of confronting such massive crowds helped to check the actions of those unmoved or uninterested by the normative appeals of challengers. In Ukraine, for example, special forces units from the East who predominantly felt that Yanukovic was the legitimate successor to Kuchma were nonetheless aware of the dangers involved in attempting to remove hundreds of thousands of demonstrators from the streets. The costs of chaos also appear to have been on the minds of fence-sitters at the SBU as they contemplated potential courses of action. Numbers thus considerably raised the stakes of the standoff.

Factors beyond the direct control of challengers were also leveraged to make security force members aware of the potential costs of their actions. Legal penalties offered one such instrument. Although the question of legal responsibility for repression did not seem to have played a particularly significant role in Serbia, where many members of the security forces operated outside the rule of law, it did appear to be on the minds of both police and military officers in Ukraine in 2004. Recent legal development

had strengthened the position of prosecutors and corruption in the ruling regime meant that the potency of legal deterrents to the use of force was to some degree contingent on perceptions of challenger power and likelihood of success. Thus during the Orange Revolution, as challenger strength was perceived to be high, constant declarations by the opposition that “there will be a tomorrow” served as an effective reminder of the potential consequences of “illegal” actions. Clearly, structural factors were also at play. The threat of legal sanctions were more potent in Ukraine where the legal system had undergone more relevant reforms than in Serbia of 2000.

Finally, while not directly resulting from challenger actions, external influences on costs of repression are also worth noting. The phenomenon of foreign diplomatic warnings was more salient in Ukraine than in Serbia, where Milosevic and other key players in the security forces were under indictment from the Hague. In Ukraine, Western diplomats reportedly informed high ranking decision-makers that the consequences of bloodshed might include travel restrictions and other sanctions that would directly influence their quality of life. Western politicians and diplomats also contributed to the publicity and attention surrounding the demonstrations, further increasing potential costs of violence. The leaders of the Orange Revolution maintained positive relationships with influential embassies, whose attention and warnings during the critical moments of the crisis may well have influenced the costs of repression.

### ***Costs of Accommodation***

High costs of accommodation – including potential losses incurred as a result of regime change, possible penalties meted out by the incumbent regime, and physical harm

at the hands of demonstrators – tended to inhibit loyalty shifts by members of the security forces in the failed cases in Ukraine and Serbia. Limitations existed on the extent to which challengers could reduce the potential costs imposed by a regime.

Significant costs of accommodation may particularly help to explain the variation at the tops of the chains of command, in the decisions of presidents Kuchma in Ukraine and Milosevic in Serbia. With little to look forward to but a prison cell in the Hague once he lost power, Milosevic was undeterred by the potential costs of repression. Kuchma, on the other hand, was already ceding power to a successor and so was more acutely aware of the costs of repression upon his retirement than of the costs of allowing Yushchenko to gain power. In contrast, Kuchma crony Medvechuk, who believed that he had much to lose by a Yushchenko victory, was reportedly less inhibited and may well have played a role in the mobilization of Interior Ministry troops on the night of November 28<sup>th</sup>.

For security force commanders, post-transition prospects seem to have had a varying impact on their willingness to use force. In Serbia, General Pavkovic, who was reportedly hesitant to accept responsibility for repressive orders, fared well after October 5<sup>th</sup>. On the other hand, while historical accounts have emphasized negotiations between Djinjic and JSO leader Legija before October 5<sup>th</sup>, any assurances of continuity did not appear to have greatly influenced the decisions made by Legija, who allegedly would have been willing to crack down had a critical mass of demonstrators failed to appear. In Ukraine, there was no evidence that Yushchenko or other Orange leaders offered bargains to the heads of the power ministries. Farther down in the ranks, more general assurances that security forces would continue to play a role in a democratic future seemed to have helped assuage

concerns in both countries, and counteracted attempts by regimes to heighten anxiety about their would-be successors.

Potential costs imposed by the regime in power also acted as a disincentive to loyalty shifts in both countries. Individuals were sometimes deterred from taking steps to facilitate a change in the status quo, with costs overriding frustration with the regime or sympathies for the opposition. In Serbia, even police officers who disliked Milosevic reported being highly aware of the potential costs of disobedience. They argued that in the dismal economy of the mid-1990s, unemployment was a major concern, given their lack of alternative professional skills. In Ukraine of 2001, members of the military similarly argue that part of the reason they didn't discuss the Ukraine Without Kuchma movement was that conversations about political affiliations could threaten their jobs. In both cases, the perceived costs associated with loyalty shifts meant that relative legitimacy did now weigh heavily in their decision-making. On the other hand, when the costs of disloyalty were relatively low, it became easier to act on conviction. The cadets at Ukraine's Interior Ministry academy who openly defected in 2004 arguably had little to lose, as they had committed less to their careers than had mid-career professionals.

Costs of disloyalty to the regime varied within different professional environments. In some towns in Serbia, police officers felt comfortable displaying Otpor flags on their desks by fall 2000. In other towns, conditions were more constrained. Similarly in Ukraine, those Interior Ministry officers in the east sympathetic to the opposition felt that they had to remain deeply secretive about their affiliations, while relations were more open in the western regions of the country.

The risks surrounding the detection of loyalty shifts appeared to exert an influence on the ways that loyalty shifts were manifested. When costs appeared high, clandestine leaks were more common than public declarations of support. Interpersonal trust played a particularly important role over the longer course of the campaign in both Serbia and Ukraine, as challengers probed security force contacts to determine the extent to which they and their colleagues would be willing to uphold the status quo. Creative use of technology offered one practical way to minimize risk of detection – in Ukraine, for example disposable calling cards for cellphones helped to mask the identity of tips. In both Serbia and Ukraine, some degree of personal trust that challengers would keep assistance confidential helped to reduce fears about the consequences associated with defection. For this reason, positive personal contacts and connections through social networks helped to play a role in facilitating assistance.

Finally, as was made clear both by the successful and failed episodes of protest, high immediate costs of allowing challengers to continue their actions did appear to prompt members of the security forces to comply with – or even overdeliver on – orders to suppress those actions. When police forces felt threatened, as they did in 1993 in Serbia and in 2001 in Ukraine, they were more likely to strike forcefully against demonstrators. Even those generally hesitant to engage forces in a crackdown – for example General Krga from military counterintelligence in Serbia – later stated that they might well have been compelled to respond had challengers attacked their positions.

### ***Likelihood of Success***

As posited in Chapter 1, perceptions about challengers' odds of assuming power appear to have played a central role in influencing decision-making within security forces in Ukraine and Serbia. The position described by one Ukrainian soldier as "a waiting mode" appears to have aptly described a stance taken by many individuals throughout the security forces in both countries. Even among those generally sympathetic to the opposition or resentful of the regime, fence-sitting appeared to be the wisest course of action until challengers were able to prove that there was at least a reasonable probability that opposition efforts would not be stopped in their tracks. For those unpersuaded by the challengers' cause or with a great deal at stake in the status quo, indications that a regime change was imminent pushed them to make decisions that benefited challengers.

Likelihood of success was sometimes closely interwoven with other strategic objectives. Assessments of challengers' prospects for success particularly influenced elements of the calculation of the costs surrounding loyalty or disloyalty. When prospects appeared dim – for example in 2001 in Ukraine, or in 1996/1997 in Serbia – and the current regime appeared likely to remain in power, the potential costs imposed by the regime for loyalty shifts were particularly salient. In light of the lack of momentum toward change, individuals considered these costs prohibitive. When, on the other hand, a change in government seemed imminent, the cost calculus shifted as challengers became more likely to be in a position to mete out punishment for repressive orders and to those carried them out.

Predictions about likelihood of success were in turn influenced by perceptions of relative legitimacy. As challengers developed legitimacy within some segments of the security forces, perceptions of their viability evolved as individuals saw the effect that this had on their colleagues. In Serbia, for example, officers began noticing as early as summer 2000 that their colleagues were reading opposition newspapers, raising questions about where their loyalties would fall when put to the test. During the course of Ukraine's Orange Revolution, the support of western army commanders and Interior Ministry units for Yushchenko influenced the dynamics of decision-making for Yanukovic supporters from the east.

On a smaller scale as well, mutual reinforcement within groups or units helped to build confidence. In Serbia on the night before October 5<sup>th</sup>, as local police officers discussed whether or not they would maintain the roadblocks they'd been ordered to establish, dissenters were emboldened by indications from their colleagues that they too were likely to defect. In Ukraine, the fact that 300 Interior Ministry cadets – a population that had been explicitly targeted by challengers – took part in defection likely contributed to each individual cadet's willingness to make a stand on the Maidan.

However, the case of Serbia in 1996/1997 indicates that some defections alone were not enough to convince security forces that challenger success was imminent. A strong, united opposition was also critical. As noted in the previous account of the episode, some limited evidence of loyalty shifts did occur during the course of the demonstrations. Of these, General Perisic's stand in support of the students was the most visible. Subversive action of local police officers – leaking information about crackdowns – also occurred. Under different circumstances, these initial fissures and breakdowns in discipline might

have potentially have initiated a cascade effect. However, it never appeared likely that challengers would achieve the momentum needed to effect a change in regime. First, the initial objective was not to oust Milosevic, but instead to protest the local elections, which Milosevic ultimately conceded. Second, even had challengers wanted to push for Milosevic's ouster, deep fractures in the political opposition and an unwillingness to exploit existing cracks in the security forces undermined the forcefulness of the challenge.

If challenger strength was necessary to initiate cascades of defections, then challenger weakness appeared to particularly strengthen the resolve of security forces to engage in repression. In Ukraine, while he maintained cordial interactions with challengers throughout most of the 2001 UBK demonstration, General Savchenko's awareness of challenger weakness – revealed in an interaction with organizers on the night of March 8<sup>th</sup> – likely bolstered his decision to crack down heavily on challengers the following day. Three years later, once it became clear that the Orange Revolution was likely to result in a shift in power, his tone appears to have changed considerably.

### **Implementing the Strategic Objectives**

As was noted in the case studies, some tactics and features of a movement appeared to be particularly effective at disrupting the status quo by addressing multiple strategic objectives. While this study covered a broad range of tactics, activities, and features of a movement that appeared relevant, the following section will focus on a few that spanned across two or more strategic objectives:

## **Attract and Engage New Constituencies**

Challengers' ability to mobilize new segments of society around a common goal – in the cases studied here, the demise of the ruling regime – influenced decision-making within the security forces across both normative and utilitarian considerations. Perhaps most significantly, the incorporation of new actors into the political struggle – in the case of Serbia, the Kolubara miners, and in the case of Ukraine a broad swath of average citizens – altered security force calculations about the regime's prospects for survival. Grassroots outreach also helped challengers raise the costs of repression by expanding their capacity to mobilize in the face of repression. Challengers' ability to attract new and wide-ranging constituencies altered the normative lens through which some within the security forces perceived the struggle. While it may be easy to dismiss a narrow group of intellectual elites as fringe radicals (for example note Serbia, March 1991) it becomes more difficult to ignore a symphony of protest from across the political and social spectrum attempting to expose regime illegitimacy and demonstrate their own.

## **Maintain Nonviolent Discipline**

Nonviolent discipline disrupted normal patterns of behavior by altering the playing field on which traditional struggles are waged. It also spanned a number of the strategic objectives proposed in this study. The issue is particularly important as it distinguishes the conflicts examined in this study from traditional insurgencies or internal war. Cases in Serbia and Ukraine indicate that nonviolent discipline had particular influence within three of the strategic objectives: challenger legitimacy, costs of accommodation, and

costs of repression. First, by maintaining a firm nonviolent stance and by clearly communicating that commitment to members of the security forces, challengers in both Serbia of 2000 and Ukraine of 2004 were able to earn the trust of at least some key members of the security forces and to refute regime propaganda. Secondly, challengers' ability to maintain nonviolent discipline eliminated a major concern for security forces charged with maintaining public order, reducing fears of chaos, rioting, or armed struggle. Finally by eliminating pretexts for repression, maintaining nonviolent discipline ensured that strong-armed repression would backfire on security forces. Notably, the maintenance of nonviolent discipline often included proactive steps to avoid reacting to provocations – a common tactic for regimes attempting to justify repression – as well as the exclusion of violent tactics from challengers' repertoire of actions.

### **Expand Capacity for Rapid Mass Mobilization**

The numbers of civilians that challengers could ultimately mobilize proved to be one of the most effective tools in disrupting loyalty patterns. Numbers provided a concrete deterrent against repression and sent clear signals about the strength of challengers and their likelihood of success. Crowd size was the one factor explicitly mentioned by nearly all members of security forces and challenger strategists interviewed as significant in creating hesitation about the costs of a crackdown during the final phases of successful confrontations. And as other authors have indicated, numbers brought demonstrations to a “tipping point” after which challenger success appeared inevitable. Just as civilians were watching security forces to determine their own costs of participation, so were individuals in uniform also watching the crowds to determine the relative strength of the challengers.

Challengers' ability to rapidly mobilize was augmented by extended social networks developed over the longer course of their campaigns, use of communications technology that allowed them to quickly spread alerts that more supporters were needed, and, sometimes, willingness of members of the security forces to share information about potential points of escalation. In Serbia, the SAJ commander at Kolubara leaked mobilization plans to Velimir Ilic, permitting him and other organizers to rally support from neighboring villages. In Ukraine, constant communication with networks throughout the Kiev region allowed challengers to maintain critical mass on the Maidan even in the evenings, when a crackdown was more likely.

### **Develop Strategic Communications**

Clear communications and effective messaging was also critical to break through preconceived notions and alter assumptions within the security forces. Communication is a factor that transverses each of the five strategic objectives. Successful challengers were able to identify issues likely to be relevant to security force decision-making and to capitalize on opportunities to communicate these messages to target audiences.

Themes that resonated with security forces – such as failed wars or criminal records – were communicated through public announcements, street theater, or viral humor. Other messages were sent publicly, through the few independent media sources available. Active cooperation by independent media outlets – Fifth Channel in Ukraine and opposition newspapers in Serbia – proved particularly helpful in countering regime attempts to delegitimize challengers through propaganda. While some key units were security forces have some exposure to media messaging. The issue of access thus

becomes particularly important. Findings in this study highlight the role of independent media in both cases; the factor has also been noted by Michael McFaul.<sup>3</sup> Other messages were systematically communicated at the local level, for example Otpor's effort to share consistent information about its objectives and tactics during the course of arrests.

### **Expand Informal Channels of Communication**

Successful challengers also relied on informal channels of communication to bypass media restrictions and disrupt preexisting biases within the security forces. In what might be described as an indirect approach to cultivating perceptions of legitimacy, challengers in both Serbia and Ukraine were able to leverage personal ties and affiliations by recruiting individuals close to the security forces. In both cases, the incorporation of retired generals to the ranks of the opposition – Perisic and Obradovic in Serbia, and Antonets in Ukraine – helped to open channels of communication and additionally bolstered challenger credibility within the security forces. Recruitment of former officers from across the ranks meant that the campaign had access to their friends and former colleagues. Challengers in both countries used similar tactics in this indirect approach, though Ukrainian efforts appear to have been more systematically developed.

Outreach to security force families also appears to have been significant in both cases. In Serbia, outreach appears to have been particularly *ad hoc*, with the appeal of the Otpor student movement organically attracting the children of police and military officers. In Ukraine – five times the size of Serbia – the effort was more strategic. General Antonets' teams of military and Interior Ministry veterans made explicit efforts to connect with the communities of security forces nationwide throughout the course of the campaign.

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<sup>3</sup> McFaul (2005)

Outreach efforts offered challengers informal channels of communication through which information could flow. Information about security force concerns and preferences allowed them to develop their strategy and messaging, to more effectively argue for their accommodation / dilution, only partially offset by relative legitimacy. Such informal channels sometimes also offered immediate tactical assistance – notification of troop movements allowed challengers to prepare to raise the costs of repression, while insider knowledge about the “moods” of various units and forces helped them to tailor their persuasion techniques as they competed with the regime for relative legitimacy.

### **Cultivate and Leverage External Support**

Allies outside the immediate struggle were able to play a positive role altering the playing field in successful cases in both Serbia and Ukraine. Though factors exogenous to challengers’ activities were certainly at work, their ability to attract and leverage external support can be considered an important element of a successful strategy. The role of external assistance in successful civic mobilization during the Colored Revolutions has been discussed in recent literature.<sup>4</sup> A few factors, however, appear particularly relevant to the issue of security force loyalty shifts. First, as regimes and challengers battled for relative legitimacy, external training on technical campaign skills and financial assistance to media outlets was helpful for challengers crafting their message. Second, international attention to election fraud and external assistance to the civil society organizations that helped to uncover fraudulent results bolstered challengers’

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<sup>4</sup> See for example, Michael McFaul “Importing Revolution: Internal and External Factors in Ukraine’s 2004 Democratic Breakthrough” *CDDRL Working Papers Number 59*, May 2006; See also Steve Pifer, “European Mediators and Ukraine’s Orange Revolution”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 54, no. 6 November/December 2007

capacity to use elections as a tool to undermine regime legitimacy.<sup>5</sup> Third, the skills and knowledge of nonviolent practices elsewhere helped challengers to craft their strategies based on prior examples: Serbs read about nonviolent struggle from the writings of Gene Sharp who in turn shared their experiences and best practices with Georgian, and later Ukrainian members of civil society. Fourth, public and private statements by external forces urging a bloodless solution, and sometimes threatening sanctions should a crackdown occur helped to raise the costs of repression and perhaps gave pause to some individuals along the chain of command.

## **Section 2: Additional Episodes**

### ***Introduction***

Section Two of this chapter builds on analysis of Serbia and Ukraine by briefly reviewing four additional episodes in post-communist countries. In each of the four episodes – Georgia (2003), Kyrgyzstan (2004), Belarus (2006), and Uzbekistan (2004), challengers used predominantly nonviolent means to pursue their objectives, relying primarily on popular mobilization as a key engine of power. With the exception of the Andijan residents of Uzbekistan – all sought to replace the existing regime. However, challengers' strategic planning, organization, and tactics selected vary considerably from case to case, as do the environments in which challengers are able to operate.

Presented in descending order of favorability of outcomes for challengers, the four episodes demonstrate a full spectrum of potential security force responses. In Georgia, the multiple security institutions publicly refused to obey when the regime leadership attempted to declare a state of emergency. Kyrgyzstan offers a more ambiguous outcome,

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<sup>5</sup> McFaul (2005)

with some security forces initially engaging in non-lethal repression but ultimately defecting. During demonstrations after the 2006 Belarusian elections, participants were beaten and jailed. And during the Andijan episode of 2004, as many as 750 civilians were allegedly killed after being gunned down by elite forces from the Uzbek capital of Tashkent. Comparing these outcomes and the events leading up to them is facilitated by the fact that each of the post-communist states covered maintains roughly parallel security institutions.

Limited availability of evidence prohibits conclusive assessment of the attitudes and assumptions within the “black box” of each set of security forces. However, those factors that are observable are discussed within the context of each challenger’s relative strengths and weaknesses in achieving the five strategic objectives proposed in this study.

## **Georgia**

Georgia’s Rose Revolution, which occurred between Serbia’s 2000 ouster of Milosevic and Ukraine’s 2004 Orange Revolution, offers an additional successful case against which findings from the two primary cases might be considered. A lack of professionalism and centralized control within the Georgian security forces may have meant that their ultimate defection came as less of a surprise than had those in Serbia and Ukraine.<sup>6</sup> However, as in other successful episodes, security force loyalty shifts have

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<sup>6</sup> One officer in the Georgian border police later commented, for example, that “in general, during the entire period of Shevardnadze’s rule, and especially for the last two-three years, there was a complete vacuum – especially in the system that deals with national security.” Senior officer, Border Guard, Interviewed by Steve York, January 2004.

since been cited as a critical factor in the bloodless outcome of the crisis and political victory of the opposition.<sup>7</sup>

Georgian challengers' strategies bore echoes of those used in Serbia. While Georgians rallied against flawed parliamentary, rather than presidential elections, challengers had used similar planning and tactics for broad-based civic mobilization – probably no coincidence, as Georgian civic groups had been inspired, and in some cases trained, by Serbian Otpor activists.<sup>8</sup> Irregularities in the election process were identified immediately after the November 2<sup>nd</sup> elections, as local election observers, including the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) and the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) reported violations throughout Georgia.<sup>9</sup> Opposition parties, led by Mikheil Saakashvili and Nino Burjanadze highlighted discrepancies between official and unofficial vote counts and demanded that the results be annulled.<sup>10</sup> International monitors confirmed their charges: preliminary OSCE conclusions stated that the elections “fell short of a number of OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections”<sup>11</sup>

On November 17, more than 50,000 demonstrators gathered at Freedom Square in central Tbilisi, about 3,000 of whom formed a human chain around the state chancellery.<sup>12</sup> However, due to the “apparent readiness of special forces units to use force, as well as the absence of a “critical mass,” leaders postponed the rally, calling for

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<sup>7</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki, *Georgia's Rose Revolution: A Participant's Perspective*, United Special Report 167, July 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Cory Welt, *Regime Vulnerability and Popular Mobilization in Georgia's Rose Revolution*, CDDRL Working Papers, No. 67, September 2006; Peter Baker, “Tbilisi’s ‘Revolution of Roses’ Mentored by Serbian Activists,” *The Washington Post*, November 25, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> International Crisis Group, *Georgia: What Now?* Europe Report No. 15, December 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Kandelaki (2006).

<sup>6</sup> International Crisis Group (2003).

<sup>12</sup> Kandelaki (2006).

reinforcements from Georgia's rural regions.<sup>13</sup> Three days later, convoys of cars stretched in from western Georgia, bringing the total numbers of participants to more than 100,000 by November 21<sup>st.</sup>,<sup>14</sup>

Interior Ministry forces on the scene were fully armed. Prior to the elections, Interior Minister Koba Narchemashvili had warned opposition party leaders against instigating demonstrations. On November 12<sup>th</sup>, claiming that "destructive forces" had been trying to smuggle arms and ammunition into the city, Narchemashvili used Interior Ministry forces to block roads to Tbilisi.<sup>15</sup> The actions led to at least one serious injury: when police fired warning shots above a crowd on Kakheti Highway, an elderly woman was hit and wounded by a stray bullet.<sup>16</sup> The incident highlighted a major problem for the Georgian police forces, which lacked appropriate non-lethal means of crowd control. As one Western observer noted, this fact raised particular concerns as demonstrations escalated, as it "was between shields batons, and shooting the protestors."

By November 22<sup>nd</sup>, the situation within the Georgian security forces was already ambiguous. Narchemashvili publicly stated that the Internal Troops and police were ready to act on the president's orders and would undertake any measures that Shevardnadze deemed necessary.<sup>17</sup> However, challengers report that by November 22, they knew that some security units would not intervene, "although the risk of violence

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. As a reference point, Georgia's population is half the size of Serbia's, and about one-eleventh of Ukraine's. (McFaul)

<sup>15</sup> "Georgian interior minister warns against street protests after elections," *Prime-News News Agency* [in Georgian], November 2, 2003; Akaky Mikadze, "Can Shevardnadze Ward off the Blow," *MN Bureau*. Retrieved from World New Connection.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>"Georgian interior minister 'ready to act' on president Shevardnadze's orders," *Kavkasia-Press News Agency*, November 22, 2003.

was still great with no word from a number of special forces units loyal to the president.”<sup>18</sup>

Tensions reached a peak on the afternoon of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, when protesters led by Saakashvili led a group of demonstrators to charge the parliament building. Apparently overwhelmed by the numbers, troops watched passively as participants entered the rear of the building to interrupt Shevardnadze in the midst of a speech. Saakashvili’s decision to lead the charge into parliament constituted, in the words of one analyst “a more radical and less constitutional step” than anything executed in the Serbian or Ukrainian cases.<sup>19</sup> Afterwards, Shevardnadze attempted to declare a state of emergency, stating that the opposition’s actions constituted “an armed coup d’etat.” He went on to say that “not only the Ministry of Internal Affairs but also the Defense Ministry will be engaged, and we will restore order.”<sup>20</sup> Noting the state of emergency, Saakashvili claimed in an interview afterwards that the “[security forces later] said they had orders to kill me”<sup>21</sup>

However, it appears that individuals within a number of institutions balked at the prospect of repressing the burgeoning demonstrations. As one analysis observes, Shevardnadze’s call for a state of emergency, “intended to intimidate, had the opposite effect. The ministers of Defense and Interior praised Shevardnadze for not using force. It was clear that it would be impossible to enforce the state of emergency as more and more ministries joined the protestors.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Kandelaki (2006).

<sup>19</sup> McFaul (2005).

<sup>20</sup> “Georgia Plans Election for January 4 after ‘Rose Revolution,’” *Europe Intelligence Wire*, November 25, 2003. Retrieved from [http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary\\_0286-19506253\\_ITM](http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-19506253_ITM)

<sup>21</sup> Ken Stier, “It Could Have Gone Badly,” *Newsweek*, December 08, 2003

<sup>22</sup> International Crisis Group (2003).

Although Saakashvili would lament soon after the events “there are some generals in the Army who are very corrupt and very unhappy with my possible presidency,” it was clear that once a critical mass of civilians had hit the streets, resistance to Shevardnadze ran throughout the ranks. Journalists noted at the time that there were also “a large number of generals [who] refused to serve Shevardnadze.”<sup>23</sup> On the night of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Georgian Defense Minister David Tevdzadze stated that that his troops would not use force, declaring that “the army doesn’t consider it necessary yet to use military force to establish order, but, just the opposite, believes it necessary to establish such a regime that would ensure the citizens’ safety until the situation is settled.”<sup>24</sup> Within the border police, one officer contacted by the opposition during those critical moments assured them that “even if anybody attempts to involve our units, this possibility is excluded. The units will stay where they supposed to stay – at the state border of Georgia.”<sup>25</sup> And in the Interior Ministry, commanders with responsibility over armored vehicles insisted that no mobilization occur without a direct order from them, to prevent others within the security structures from circumventing the chain of command.<sup>26</sup> Ultimately, civil society leaders concluded, there was “no violence because the various security forces chose not to respond to public demonstrations with force.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Georgia: Analysis**

As they had in Serbia and as they later would in Ukraine, elections provided a opportunity for challengers to expose the sitting regime’s decline in relative legitimacy. By November 20<sup>th</sup>, National Security Council chief and coordinator of the national police

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<sup>23</sup> Stier (2003);

<sup>24</sup> “Troops Start Deserting Shevardnadze,” *The Australian*, November 24, 2003.

<sup>25</sup> Senior officer, Border Guard, Interviewed by Steve York, January 2004.

<sup>26</sup> Senior Officer, Interior Ministry of Georgia, Interview by Steve York, January 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Kandelaki (2006).

and other security forces Tedo Japaridze already supported new elections and drafted a speech for Shevardnadze in which the leader would announce them.<sup>28</sup> When Shevardnadze refused, Japaridze openly acknowledged on television that "vote rigging and fraud" had occurred, and warned authorities against using force.<sup>29</sup> His subsequent defection to the ranks of the opposition likely provided a compelling data point for others considering similar actions.

Perhaps the most commonly-emphasized element of challenger strategy was their reportedly intensive efforts to establish goodwill and legitimacy within the security forces. According to McFaul, the political opposition began "courting the security ministries" well before elections.<sup>30</sup> While one border guard interviewed had not interacted directly with challengers, he did note that "after the revolution, one of the opposition leaders told me that they were 'studying' my personality for over two years"- a fact that, if true, would indicate some degree of thought had gone into developing opposition strategy.<sup>31</sup>

A range of tactics was employed to cultivate the trust of security forces and establish challenger legitimacy. As one newspaper commented, "the smartest thing Saakashvili did was to woo the Georgian army and police. His followers showered the troops with roses, paid visits to their families, invited them to share food in the chilly streets outside parliament."<sup>32</sup> Kmara female activists "gave flowers to troops deployed around the city days before the revolution and... activists distributed sandwiches and went to great

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<sup>28</sup> Welt (2006) 10.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> McFaul (2005) 14.

<sup>31</sup> Senior officer, Georgian border police, Interviewed by Steve York, January 2004.

<sup>32</sup> David Ignatius, "Six Rules for a Peaceful Democratic Revolution," *Washington Post*, July 13, 2004.

lengths to treat the troops the same as their fellow demonstrators.”<sup>33</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki notes explicit attempts both to establish legitimacy and reduce the perceived costs of accommodation, noting that “opposition groups, including Kmara, made strong efforts to build sympathy for their cause while downplaying the threat posed by political change.”<sup>34</sup> Challenger attempts to build solidarity with security forces were bolstered by historical precedent. As “memories of the heroism that Georgian police had shown in trying to protect civilians from attacks by Soviet security troops during the 1989 rally in Tbilisi also played a huge role in stimulating defections and keeping the 2003 response peaceful.”<sup>35</sup>

Challenger efforts appear to have been relatively successful. One member of the Georgian border guard observed later that “with strengthening of the opposition came the hope and certain optimism. It may sound as an overstatement, but indeed, there came hopes for improvement.”<sup>36</sup> As a senior Western diplomat put it, as challengers made the effort to reach out to security forces, security force members began to “see that there was a viable political force, capable of replacing Shevardnadze, in a way that was not entirely unpleasant.”<sup>37</sup>

In light of these tactics, challengers later emphasized the important role that nonviolent discipline played in preserving a bloodless outcome.<sup>38</sup> As had been the case in Serbia and later in Ukraine, demonstrators an “order brigade, dressed in orange T-shirts and made up of members of the youth group Kmara, restrained other participants from

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<sup>33</sup> Kandelaki (2006).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Senior officer, Georgian border police, Interviewed by Steve York, January 2004.

<sup>37</sup> Senior Western Diplomat, interview, Washington DC, July 24 2008.

<sup>38</sup> Kandelaki observes that “one important aspect of the whole process was Kmara’s explicitly nonviolent rhetoric and discipline.” Kandelaki (2006).

provocative behavior.”<sup>39</sup> Although Saakashvili did take risks, “it was so skillfully done,” said Tedo Japaridze later, permitting challengers “to achieve victory before going too far... it was minutes before it could have been illegitimate.”<sup>40</sup>

As the crisis expanded after the elections, a robust and diverse network of allies outside of the capital, built by challengers over the longer course of the campaign, played a critical role by increasing the costs of repression and boosting challengers’ perceived prospects. When it became clear on November 17<sup>th</sup> that they would not be able to muster the numbers necessary to successfully challenge the regime’s results, it was easy to rapidly mobilize supporters from the regions. Indeed, Kmara leaders recognized clearly that the “significant factor for the police was that ‘critical mass’ had been achieved. This was the number of protestors (120,000) necessary to give the revolution legitimacy and overwhelm the police at key moments, such as the takeover of government buildings.”<sup>41</sup> Shevardnadze reportedly stated at one point during the crisis that he did “not intend to resign at the demand of individual politicians and a few dozen young people waving flags. If there were at least a million people, it would have been different.”<sup>42</sup>

Broad-based participation appears to have had a significant effect on the perceptions of at least some Interior Ministry officers. One recalled later that when he first saw the numbers, he began to recognize that challengers’ demands were “presented not only by [political] parties and small population groups, as it had been presented to us earlier, but by the big portion of the population that supported the opposition with these demands.

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<sup>39</sup>Daan van der Schriek, “Tbilisi Revels after Shevardnadze’s Resignation,” *Eurasia Insight*, November 24, 2003. Retrieved from <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/112403a.shtml> Schriek recalled that young activists urged rank and file protestors, “some of whom were shouting abuse at security forces...don’t talk to them.”

<sup>40</sup>Tedo Japaridze, Quoted in Peter Baker, “Tbilisi’s ‘Revolution of Roses’ Mentored by Serbian Activists,” *The Washington Post*, November 25, 2003.

<sup>41</sup>Kandelaki (2006).

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

And then, of course, all of us started thinking about it seriously.”<sup>43</sup> In addition to altering his perceptions of legitimacy, the mass mobilization in response to elections also shifted perceptions about the likelihood that the government would change hands: it was not until after the opposition lead civilians in mass demonstrations that he believed that change could actually come.<sup>44</sup>

As had been the case in Serbia, one key ally cultivated by challengers was Georgia’s independent media. In the months preceding the Rose Revolution, independent media sources – particularly the television channel Rustavi-2 – were heavily critical of Shevardnadze, particularly after it became clear that elections had been fraudulent.<sup>45</sup> Media coverage also helped to increase visibility of challengers, raising the stakes involved in repression. Media coverage of a Kmara “graffiti campaign” in nine of Georgia’s main cities, propelling the story to the top of the national news.<sup>46</sup> Media during the Georgia’s 2002 “Rose Revolution,” according to former Georgian opposition leader Eduard Saakashvili: “If we had disappeared from public view, it would have been easy to destroy us.”<sup>47</sup>

Cooperation across the broad umbrella of political and civil society opposition organizations also helped to strengthen their relative positions and elevate perceived prospects of success throughout the campaign. For example, while Kmara activists were limited in numbers at first, opposition parties’ youth branches secretly offered hundreds

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<sup>43</sup> Senior Officer, Interior Ministry of Georgia. Interview by Steve York, January 2005.

<sup>44</sup> I was not expecting it as...up until November 2, until the elections were conducted and later results were announced, and until the announcement of the results were...followed by this kind of opposition reaction. Before that, of course, I did not think that this movement would take such a global scale... I simply was not expecting that the opposition was this strong and could carry its opinion [to this extent]... did not think that it could carry itself...” Senior Officer, Interior Ministry of Georgia. Interview by Steve York, January 2005.

<sup>45</sup> McFaul (2006).

<sup>46</sup> Kandelaki (2006).

<sup>47</sup> David Ignatius, “Six Rules for A Peaceful Democratic Revolution,” *Washington Post*, July 13, 2004.

of young activists to boost numbers at Kmara rallies.<sup>48</sup> In part because the elections were parliamentary, rather than presidential, there was not significant political cohesion prior to the Rose Revolution. However, it was significant that opposition forces supported each other when Saakashvili made the move to storm the parliament. As one analyst notes, his decision was tactically risky as “had part of the Georgian democratic opposition refused to go along, Shevardnadze might have been tempted to fight harder to stay in power.”<sup>49</sup>

The regime leadership, on the other hand, was unable to present a unified front. At one level, this was political – activists Giorgi Kandelaki cites “a divided ruling party [that] could not speak with one voice” as particularly significant in the challenger victory.<sup>50</sup> Within Georgia’s security forces, some version of the cascade dynamic observed in Ukraine and Serbia also appears to have been present – McFaul reports that once one “elite Interior Ministry paramilitary unit” joined the side of the challengers, “additional units followed.”<sup>51</sup>

Finally, activities by external powers, while not directly linked to challenger strategy, also appeared to influence the perceived likelihood of success. One observer speculated that it may have been significant that “Colin Powell refused to back [Shevardnadze] in his state of emergency. He said the state of emergency would be dangerous, it risked force and that force should not be used against peaceful demonstrators.”<sup>52</sup> Perhaps even more significant was the decision of Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Igor Ivanov, to

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<sup>48</sup> Particularly the first one on April 14. Coordinating with NGOs and “private contacts” in the National Movement and United Democrats, “the two parties.”

<sup>49</sup> McFaul (2005).

<sup>50</sup> Kandelaki (2006).

<sup>51</sup> McFaul (2005).

<sup>52</sup> Stier (2003).

fly to Georgia on the night of November 22<sup>nd</sup> and meet with opposition leaders before visiting Shevardnadze.<sup>53</sup> An ICG report noted that “Russia’s ambiguity towards Eduard Shevardnadze has helped the opposition to force the embattled president out of office.”<sup>54</sup> According to one member of the border police, “it was quite encouraging when I got a phone call from my contacts in Moscow, who informed me that Ivanov was on the way to Georgia and that his mission was to pacify the confronting parties and persuade Shevardnadze to resign.”<sup>55</sup>

Ultimately, the Georgia case reinforces findings from Serbia and Ukraine. This is perhaps unsurprising, as challengers pursued similar strategies to victory in those cases, and all worked within relatively permissive environments. While the episode is useful in providing an additional data point, one must look to other episodes of post-communist protest to observe broader variation.

## Kyrgyzstan

The 2005 “Tulip Revolution” in Kyrgyzstan presents a challenge to the framework proposed in this study, following a different path than episodes in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine. The case is particularly interesting in light of the fact that three years before the “Tulip Revolution,” police had fired on crowds demonstrating in Jalalabad, killing six and wounding many others. In 2005, challengers would be more successful. In the final stages of the 2005 events, the Kyrgyz leadership lost control of its security forces and

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<sup>53</sup> Only after that did he go to Shevardnadze. That was a clear indication that Russia was also not willing to support him any more. That was like his last escape.

<sup>54</sup> International Crisis Group (2003). The report cites J. Devdariani, “Russia’s guarded watchfulness,” *Civil Georgia*, November 29, 2003.

<sup>55</sup> Senior officer, Georgian border police, Interviewed by Steve York, January 2004.

challengers ultimately assumed power, despite minimal strategic planning on their part beforehand. Both the actions of the security forces and of the movement might perhaps best be described as mixed: while the Kyrgyz police did ultimately collapse in the face of challenger pressure, active repression and clashes continued until the very end. Some of the strategic objectives proposed in this study were partially fulfilled, with likelihood of challenger success appearing provide the influence on the outcome.

Some civic mobilization began during the parliamentary campaign of 2005, just five months after Ukraine's Orange Revolution. President Askar Akaev, a former physics professor who had led the country since 1990, had attempted to consolidate his waning power by manipulating the race to assure seats for a number of family members and key allies. Some localized protests took place in February before the elections in the northern towns of Kochkor and Issyk-Kul as opposition election candidates were deregistered by electoral authorities on unsubstantiated grounds.<sup>56</sup> Police authorities did not respond – most likely, according to one analyst, because they underestimated the significance of the protests.<sup>57</sup>

Open conflict between challengers and pro-regime forces erupted about two weeks after the February 27<sup>th</sup> elections. Responses began slowly in Talas, Osh and in Jalalabad, in the traditionally contentious southern region of Kyrgyzstan. They escalated considerably after the second round of elections on March 13<sup>th</sup>. The following day, about 5,000 supporters of defeated opposition leaders in Talas demonstrated and ultimately took over a government building, holding two local officials hostage for 24 hours.<sup>58</sup> Four days later,

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<sup>56</sup> International Crisis Group, "Kyrgyzstan: After the Revolution," Asia Report, No. 97, May 2005.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> He was released after 24 hours. Ibid.

local demonstrators also took over local government buildings in Osh, and Jalalabad.

Western media quickly labeled the demonstrations as “riots”<sup>59</sup>

Security force responses reflect a marked ambivalence about the use of lethal force. Although Kyrgyz police had recently received training in crowd control, from Russian special forces, they appeared ill-equipped to address the escalating events.<sup>60</sup> Two days after the takeovers of government buildings in Osh and Jalalabad, Kyrgyz Interior Ministry OMAN special police units confronted demonstrators, retaking the government offices in both cities and arresting 160.<sup>61</sup> While civilians were injured, firearms were not used. Clashes continued in both cities as demonstrators pushed back using clubs, paving stones, and other crude weapons. In Jalalabad, the crowd – including a reported 1,700 men on horseback – overwhelmed police forces and later set fire to the local police station.<sup>62</sup> Demonstrators reported that some police officers opened live fire, and police sources claimed that four officers were beaten to death.<sup>63</sup> On March 20<sup>th</sup>, amidst mounting violence, Kyrgyz Prime Minister and Akaev ally Nikolai Tanayev made a public statement that acknowledged both the relative weakness of the government forces and an unwillingness at the top layers of government to use lethal means of suppressing the rebellion. Tanayev declared that "in the police we have no rubber bullets, no gas. We don't even have enough truncheons...not the President, not me, and not the Interior

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, *Lesson of the Tulip Revolution*, Testimony before Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, April 07, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=16758>

<sup>61</sup> Martin Henningsson, “The ‘Tulip Revolution’ in Kyrgyzstan : Revolution or Coup d’état?” unpublished paper, Stockholm University, 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.forumsyd.org/upload/tmp/uppsats/TheTulipRevolution.pdf> ; Erica Marat, “The Tulip Revolution: One Year After,” *The Jamestown Foundation*, (2006) 5.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. 11.

<sup>63</sup> Marat (2006) 5; Michael Steen “Violence Rocks South Kyrgyzstan: 4 Officers Said Beaten to Death; Opposition Protests Vote Results,” *Reuters*, March 21, 2005. Retrieved from [http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2005/03/21/violence\\_rocks\\_south\\_kyrgyzstan](http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2005/03/21/violence_rocks_south_kyrgyzstan)

Minister will allow weapons to be used against our own people."<sup>64</sup>

Recognizing that the situation was escalating, Ayakev had fired his Interior Minister and Prosecutor General on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, replacing them with hardliners Keneshbek Dushebaev and Murat Satalinov.<sup>65</sup> Interior Minister Dushebayev quickly offered a more menacing statement, declaring that: "The law gives us every right to take action, including using physical force, special means and firearms "We will not shoot at peace-loving, law-abiding citizens - women, old people, children - but peace-loving citizens would never take over government buildings."<sup>66</sup> That day –March 23<sup>rd</sup> – between five hundred and a thousand protestors, led by the youth civil society organizations KelKel and Birg, rallied in Bishkek. They were beaten by Interior Ministry troops, leaving 20 participants hospitalized.<sup>67</sup>

The following day, charged by their victories in the south, additional opposition supporters from the south reached the capitol, where they congregated with other opposition supporters from the region. A group of the more radical younger members led a charge to storm the presidential White House. One witness recalls that on one side of the cordon, "there was a hardcore group of a few hundred [young men], most of them equipped with wooden sticks and wooden shields," while on the other several hundred police officers, eyed the crowd warily.<sup>68</sup> Witnesses reported hearing several shots fired.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Michael Steen, "Violence rocks south Kyrgyzstan" Reuters, March 21, 2005.

<sup>65</sup> International Crisis Group (2005) 8.

<sup>66</sup> "Riot Police Put the Squeeze on Kyrgyzstan Revolution," *Irish Independent*, March 24, 2005.

<sup>67</sup> Marat (2006) 13.

<sup>68</sup> One eyewitness described the chaotic – and contentious – scene: "the protesters were beating policemen with wooden sticks and throwing stones at the police forces and, of course, the police used their batons and shields." After some back and forth "protesters managed to repel the police forces, and this is exactly the moment when the clashes broke out...then the opposition protesters [stormed through the police and Interior Ministry troops]. The security forces dispersed and fled very quickly." Jean-Christophe Peuch "Kyrgyzstan: Eyewitness to the Revolution," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, March 25, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1058136.html>

Two people died and 121 were reported injured over the course of the transition.<sup>70</sup>

Crowds of young men then proceeded to “climb over the fences surrounding the government building, smash open the doors, and enter the building,” according to the reporter, who noted that the events took about an hour, and that the seizure of the building took about 20 minutes.<sup>71</sup> Later that afternoon, according to one account, “mounted police made a last-ditch attempt to control the situation, crashing through the crowds only to have one of their horses stolen by a protester. As security forces ran for cover, many were left bloodied and bruised.”<sup>72</sup>

Soon afterwards, Ayakev fled the country. As he departed, he reportedly ordered the heads of his security forces *not* to fire on demonstrators.<sup>73</sup> No state of emergency was ever declared.<sup>74</sup> As the security forces disappeared, crowds were left to loot the streets for the following day, until 3,000 civilians volunteered to maintain order.<sup>75</sup> In the following days, a new parliament was formed, based on the flawed election results, but which recognized opposition politician Kurmanbek Bakiev as prime minister.<sup>76</sup> Akaev officially resigned April 4, 2005.

## Kyrgyzstan: Analysis

From a review of the case, the costs of repression and likelihood of success seem to offer some explanation for the outcome. Additionally, Akaev’s drop in legitimacy over

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> International Crisis Group (2005).

<sup>71</sup> Peuch (2005)

<sup>72</sup> Jessicah Curtis and Andrew Osborn, “Kyrgyzstan: The Day the Tulip Revolution Came,” *The Independent*, March 25, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/kyrgyzstan-the-day-the-tulip-revolution-came-529847.html>

<sup>73</sup> “Crackdown in Belarus: Lukashenko Stamps Out Protests,” *Speigel Online*, March 27, 2006.

<sup>74</sup> Marat (2006) 10.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. 10.

<sup>76</sup> International Crisis Group (2005).

the course of the campaign also played a role in setting the stage for the events of March 2005.

Akaev's popularity and legitimacy had declined over the course of the campaign. The leader had lost considerable credibility within the Kyrgyz population due to clumsy attempts to place candidates close to him – including his son and daughter, and the son of Prime Minister Nikolai Tanayev – in parliamentary positions.<sup>77</sup> The ICG reported that “more malpractice took place during the campaign phase, which meant it was more visible to voters” who became infuriated over blatant examples of corruption and nepotism.<sup>78</sup> The effect on the security forces was unclear, but one analyst has argued that “the refusal of Kyrgyz forces to fire on demonstrators indicates that the former were at least sympathetic to democratization,” or perhaps more appropriately, a change from the status quo.<sup>79</sup>

There are reports of at least one meeting between opposition politicians and Interior Ministry officers prior to the events in which the officers expressed their frustration with the regime.<sup>80</sup> It also seems that due to negative views of Akaev, there was a significant degree of “popular support for the demonstrations, particularly among rural voters,” which may have helped to sway some security force members who were close to the population.

However, challengers do not appear to have been successful in offering a particularly appealing alternative. The Kyrgyz case differs from the previous “Colored Revolutions”

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<sup>77</sup> Henningsson (2006).

<sup>78</sup> International Crisis Group (2005).

<sup>79</sup> The refusal of Kyrgyz forces to fire on demonstrators indicates that the former were at least sympathetic to democratization.139M.N. Katz / Communist and Post-Communist Studies 40 (2007) 129e141

<sup>80</sup> Henningsson (2006).

in that there was no electoral victory by the political opposition.<sup>81</sup> As the manipulation had occurred prior to the elections, all but six of the 75 parliamentary seats went to candidates who, in the words of one analyst, “explicitly supported Akaev or would almost certainly have backed him.”<sup>82</sup> While there seems to have been enough support to convince demonstrators to take to the streets, the election results did not confer the same degree of moral or legal legitimacy to the opposition that a victory might have offered.<sup>83</sup> This appears to have been noted by the security forces – commenting on the events, one US diplomat at the time observed that the opposition suffered from a significant “lack of legitimacy with the army or police.”<sup>84</sup>

The chaos that surrounded transition also detracted from challenger legitimacy. One activist remarked at the time that Kyrgyz population more generally that “people are definitely happy that Akaev left but generally not happy with how it happened. I think they would have preferred another method.”<sup>85</sup> Civil society groups who had been developing strategies for the events felt largely sidelined as events evolved – organizers KelKel were particularly dismayed: one activist later lamented in an interview that they had been “working for the rule of law and a constitutional foundation because people are too unpredictable”<sup>86</sup> From Moscow, the Russian Armed Forces chief of staff was able to declare with some credibility that Russia hoped “the doped, riotous mob will not fully

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<sup>81</sup> Vitali Silitski, “Beware the People,” *Transitions Online*, March 21, 2005.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Craig Smith, “Dueling Parliaments, Old and New, Deepen Crisis in Kyrgyzstan,” *The New York Times*, March 28, 2000. Retrieved from

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/28/international/asia/28kyrgyzstan.html?th&emc=th>

<sup>85</sup> Peuch (2005).

<sup>86</sup> Smith (2005).

destabilize [Kyrgyzstan].”<sup>87</sup> Overall, there appeared to have been little strategic thought devoted to the development of challenger legitimacy.<sup>88</sup>

Chaotic conditions had implications for the perceived costs of accommodation. Security forces had reason to fear that a lack of action on their part might also have immediate consequences for their personal safety. Eyewitnesses reported that police forces “locked their riot shields in desperation as it rained paving stones.”<sup>89</sup> Another journalist present for the events wrote soon afterwards: “You could see the fear on the faces of the members of the security forces.”<sup>90</sup> Their concerns were not unjustified. When the commander of the Kyrgyz National Guard attempted to speak with crowd leaders, he was reportedly badly beaten.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, there were also some reports of ad hoc protection of police officers—one news source reported a police chief “asking the crowd to let his forces, mostly young men, leave the scene unharmed. Protesters formed a corridor to let them out but made them leave riot gear behind.”<sup>92</sup>

Self-preservation may help to explain why security forces maintained their positions for as long as they did and avoided collaborating with challengers as they had in Ukraine and Serbia. But then, given these concerns, why did they not use all the means at their disposal to defend themselves and the status quo? While some analysts cite sympathy for democratic transition, a general reluctance to use lethal force against Kyrgyz crowds may

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<sup>87</sup> “Akzaev Administration Collapses in Kyrgyzstan, Sending Tremors Across Central Asia,” *Eurasianet*, March 24, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/eav032405.shtml>

<sup>88</sup> Silijski (2005).

<sup>89</sup> One western reporter described mounted police “crashing through the crowds only to have one of their horses stolen by a protester. As security forces ran for cover, many were left bloodied and bruised.” *The Independent*, March 25, 2005. Retrieved from

[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qn4158/is\\_20050325/ai\\_n13462060](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20050325/ai_n13462060)

<sup>90</sup> Peuch (2005).

<sup>91</sup> Curtis and Osborn (2005).

<sup>92</sup> Violence Rocks South Kyrgyzstan (2005).

also have been influenced by awareness of the potential costs of repression. Officers in

Jalalabad were likely particularly aware of these costs after the 2002 Aksy massacre.

Following that episode, police had attempted to minimize the costs of repression by detaining survivors and allegedly threatening them into signing statements denying police responsibility.<sup>93</sup> However, one senior police officer later recalled that police felt that the government had not backed them up sufficiently. They had “let us down after the Aksy events, and we do not want to end up between the government and the people again.”<sup>94</sup> Another officer said: “We have the right to use arms if someone attacks the police station, but … the police are defenseless -- it's better to get a couple of stones thrown at your head than be dragged” through the Kyrgyz legal system.<sup>95</sup>

As costs were weighed and the demonstrations turned into riots, the latent potential for heightened violence almost certainly came into play. Analysts later attributed Akaev’s decision to insist on no use of lethal weapons with his recognition that “firing on an unarmed crowd could lead to civil war.”<sup>96</sup> One subsequent analysis of the police forces noted that “all were afraid of the reaction of ordinary people if they fired on the crowds.”<sup>97</sup> According to this account, security forces felt that they had few options for

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<sup>93</sup>According to one blogger’s account, participants were instructed by police officers to report “that the bruises and wounds had been result of a fall from apple trees.” Sultan Kanazarov, “Azimbek Beknazarov: Blood of the Aksy Victims Toppled Akaev’s Regime, and That’s What Awaits the Powers-that-be Nowadays,” *Ferghana.ru*, December 03, 2008. Retrieved from

<http://enews.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=2340>

<sup>94</sup> International Crisis Group (2005).

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Martha Brill Olcott writes that “to his credit though, Askar Akaev did learn one thing from the events in Aksy, that firing on an unarmed crowd could lead to civil war, and for all his unwillingness to resign, he choose to draw the line at that.” Olcott (2005).

<sup>97</sup> International Crisis Group (2005).

crowd control and were highly concerned about the consequences using of extreme force.<sup>98</sup>

Ultimately, one of the most compelling arguments for why Kyrgyz security forces did not attempt to fight protestors was that they felt that it was a futile endeavor. The perceived likelihood of success seems to have played a particularly strong role in determining the outcome – as the International Crisis Group writes, “the reaction of the security forces suggests they knew there was little point in opposing the protestors.”<sup>99</sup>

As had been the case in other successful episodes, the relative size of the crowds contributed to perceived likelihood of success. In what appears to be a common narrative in the Colored Revolutions, one police officer who met with an opposition member prior to the events had told the politician that “if many people came to demonstrate they would join them while if only a small number turned up they would quash them.”<sup>100</sup> As many as 50,000 showed up in Jalalabad on March 19, marking the first time the Kyrgyz population had been mobilized in such significant mass.<sup>101</sup> While the crowd size of 15,000-20,000 in Bishkek on March 24<sup>th</sup> was nowhere near that which had been mustered in Ukraine and Serbia, it was notably stronger than the 1000-person crowd that had been beaten and dispersed the day earlier.<sup>102</sup> Tactical numerical advantages may have also played a role on the 24<sup>th</sup>. In one account of the early standoff in Bishkek, “there were less than 100 [police officers facing] about 5,000 protesters and 5,000 others.”<sup>103</sup> However, it is unlikely that numbers alone were the deciding factor – one commentator astutely

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Henningsson (2006).

<sup>101</sup> Marat (2006) 5-7.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>103</sup> Peuch (2005).

observed that “it was amazing how *few* protesters it took in Bishkek to oust Akaev” compared to larger, unsuccessful protests in Azerbaijan and Belarus.”<sup>104</sup>

The spread of opposition throughout the nation was arguably a determinative factor. As had been the case in Serbia, strength and momentum had been developed in the provinces, and then transported in full force to the capital – by March 21<sup>st</sup>, protestors had occupied seven regional administration buildings in Jalalabad, Uzgen, Osh, and Kochkor and Talas, in the north.<sup>105</sup> While the southern region had traditionally been politically active, the northern mobilization in Talas, and later Bishkek signaled that the conflict had extended beyond its usual periphery.<sup>106</sup> By March 24<sup>th</sup>, accounts of the events, reading more like those of an insurgency than a popular movement, observed that “the Kyrgyz opposition now controls over two-thirds of the country’s territory and one-third of its population”<sup>107</sup> A diverse collection of participants in Bishkek also offered a clear signal that the regime was unlikely to maintain power: for the first time, a broad range of classes and political constituencies were also mobilized, including workers, students, urban residents, and peasants.<sup>108</sup> At the time of the final confrontation between challengers and police officers in Bishkek, then, challengers appeared to hold a considerable advantage, particularly given the fact that Interior Ministry forces in the capital had already observed the lack of response by their colleagues in the south.

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<sup>104</sup> Silitski (2005).

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.; Marat (2006) 6.

<sup>106</sup> Silitski (2005).

<sup>107</sup> Marat (2006) 7.

<sup>108</sup> The ICG writes that “the protestors were very diverse: Bakiev, Usen Sydykov and Beknazarov brought their supporters; Roza Otunbaeva helped transport activists from the south; Jeenbekov brought people from Talas and Japarov from Kochkor, while supporters of Atambayev and Melis Eshimkanov came from their villages near the capital. Workers at bazaars, many of them from the south, joined in. There were also young people from groups such as KelKel, and other urban residents attracted by Nazaraliev’s appeals for support.” International Crisis Group (2005).

Overall, Kyrgyzstan appears to be hybrid case. It was not entirely bloodless, as there were instances of physically forceful clashes between challengers and Kyrgyz security forces. Akayev's reluctance to use lethal force – motivated in part by the costs of repression after a 2002 massacre – was fortunate for challengers as security forces never appear to have been ordered to open fire on them. By mobilizing significant numbers from different regions of the country, challengers were ultimately able to successfully project a high likelihood of success, which outweighed mediocre levels of challenger legitimacy and potentially significant costs of accommodation.

The fact that perceived likelihood of success – rather than challenger legitimacy – was a primary consideration may help to explain the nature of decisions made by security forces over the course of the event. Unlike the successful cases in Ukraine and Serbia, here was little evidence of attempts by security force members to assist challengers by communicating about plans or offering advice. Instead, “loyalty shifts” appear to have taken the form of relative passivity in the face of demonstrator pressure. One commentator has written that “the first non-electoral revolution in the region, Kyrgyzstan, carries an important lesson: there is no way to stop people once they are committed to changing their government.”<sup>109</sup> While determination and perceived likelihood of challenger success certainly played a role in the outcome of the events, a lack of strategic planning and ability to achieve relative legitimacy left much to fortune.

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<sup>109</sup> Silitski (2005).

## **Belarus**

The Minsk demonstrations of March 2006 stand out as the most robust expression of opposition to the Lukashenko regime in its dozen years in power.<sup>110</sup> Ultimately, the effort was unsuccessful in eliciting either loyalty shifts or significant concessions by the regime. Challengers were unable to overcome preemptive action by the Belarusian authorities, undoubtedly prompted by lessons learned from the preceding “Colored Revolutions.”

Demonstrations began on Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, the day of the presidential elections, and lasted until activists were forcibly disbanded during a march to the Minsk prison on Saturday, March 25th. Politicians Alaksandar Milinkevich and Alaksandar Kazulin, two of the five opposition candidates initially registered for the elections, co-led the actions.

<sup>111</sup>Student civic organizations also participated, though their ranks had been diminished by the recent arrests of activists.<sup>112</sup>

Official sources on Sunday reported Lukashenko had won 88 percent of the total vote count, a figure that surpassed even those reported by state exit polls earlier that day.<sup>113</sup> The initial gathering in response to the results attracted 15,000 participants to the Minsk

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<sup>110</sup> Steven Lee Myers and C. J. Chivers, “Arrests Hold down Protests on Belarus Vote,” *The New York Times*, March 22, 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/22/international/europe/22belarus.html>

<sup>111</sup> With Milinkevich winning the largest percentage of the opposition vote, Kazulin rallied in support of his rival, calling for a revote on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>112</sup> David Marples, “Color Revolutions: The Belarus Case,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39 (2006) 351-364.

<sup>113</sup>Myers and Chivers (2006).

central square. About 30 tents were erected, as they had been in Ukraine.<sup>114</sup> Interior Ministry and KGB forces were present, but did not attempt to disperse the crowds. Observers noted that while there were 30 buses and 20 army trucks filled with riot police on the scene, regime responses were unusually restrained during the events, and no order to intervene appears to have been given.<sup>115</sup> The following day, crowds returned to the square after a press conference in which Milinkevich charged the KGB with running the elections, rather than the election commission.<sup>116</sup> Overnight, as crowds diminished, the regime responded. About 100 protesters were gathered up and arrested by Interior Ministry troops.<sup>117</sup> The overnight crackdown dampened turnout on Tuesday, March 21, as crowds diminished to about 2,000 to 3,000.<sup>118</sup>

There were diverse opinions within the challenger camp about next steps. Milinkevich supported those who wanted to continue to demonstrate in the camp city through the week, while Kazulin announced that additional regime repression was imminent and that demonstrators should clear the square.<sup>119</sup> However, despite these warnings, many remained. Amidst dwindling numbers, tents that had been erected were permitted to remain intact for another two days.

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<sup>114</sup> Joerg Forbig, David Marples, and Pavol Demes, "Dispatches from Minsk, March 2006," In *Prospects for Democracy in Belarus* (Washington, D.C.: The German Marshall Fund, 2006). Belarus has a population of 9.7 million, about a fifth of the size of Ukraine's and slightly less than Serbia's 10.1 million. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/22/international/europe/22belarus.html>

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. 107.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. 108.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. 108.

<sup>118</sup> David Marples, "The Presidential Campaign: An Analysis," In *Prospects for Democracy in Belarus*, ed. Joerg Forbig, David Marples, and Pavol Demes (Washington, D.C.: The German Marshall Fund, 2006), 99.

<sup>119</sup> Forbig, Marples, and Demes (2006) 109.

The Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs had allegedly declared earlier in the week that the tent city would not be destroyed by force, but this pledge was violated.<sup>120</sup> Once again, police waited until nighttime. Once crowds had diminished, police took action. At about 3am before the dawn of Friday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, Interior Ministry units in riot gear stormed and destroyed the tent city.<sup>121</sup> Journalists conveyed unverified reports that the “tent-camp had been attacked by an ad hoc regiment in direct command of the president.”<sup>122</sup> According to one eyewitness, the police commander on the scene dramatically announced at one point that “the revolution is over.”<sup>123</sup> Several hundred members of the tent city (240-450) were arrested and taken in police vehicles to an Interior Ministry prison, where they were detained.<sup>124</sup> Many were beaten.<sup>125</sup>

The following Saturday, in response, Alexander Kazulin led several hundred protesters in a march to the prison where detained demonstrators were incarcerated.<sup>126</sup> During the ensuing standoff, police “beat their shields with truncheons, fired stun grenades and charged protesters.”<sup>127</sup> Although demonstrators do appear to have initially gained momentum in pushing police lines back, challengers were ultimately cordoned off, separated into smaller groups, and then forcibly dispersed.<sup>128</sup> At least two people

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<sup>120</sup> Andrei Khrapavitski, “What’s up with Lukashenka?” *Belarusian American Blog*, March 30, 2006, Retrieved from <http://belarus.blogsome.com/2006/03/>

<sup>121</sup> Oleg Shchedrov, “Belarus Breaks up Opposition Protests over Poll,” *Reuters*, March 23, 2006. Retrieved from [http://www.redorbit.com/news/general/441439/belarus\\_breaks\\_up\\_opposition\\_protests\\_over\\_poll/](http://www.redorbit.com/news/general/441439/belarus_breaks_up_opposition_protests_over_poll/)

<sup>122</sup> Andrei Khrapavitski, “Internet Access Limited,” *Belarusian American Blog*, March 25 2006. Retrieved from <http://belarus.blogsome.com/2006/03/>

<sup>123</sup> “Lukashenko Stamps Out Protests,” *Speigel Online*, March 27, 2006 Retrieved from <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,408139,00.html>

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> “Jailed Opposition Activists Tortured—Belarusian Rights Campaigner,” *Belapan*, March 28, 2006, Retrieved from World News Connection.

<sup>126</sup> Lukashenko Stamps Out Protests (2006).

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> “As their numbers grew they began to push, at one point forcing a line of police half a block backward, and almost reaching the square’s edge. The demonstrators also briefly blocked traffic two times at one of Minsk’s main intersections, but were forced away within minutes by police charges...More police reinforcements arrived,

were taken to the hospital. Many police appeared to be particularly aggressive. One detained participant recalled soon after: "Several times they cocked their guns, putting bullets into the barrels over his head, and saying, 'You're in for it. You lost. And there's a lot of problems in store for you."<sup>129</sup>

Over the course of the protest episode, there appears to have been little evidence of loyalty shifts. Some blogs reported anecdotal instances of traffic police allowing signs of dissent to go unreported.<sup>130</sup> However, these instances do not appear to have been widespread or coordinated. Nor was there support from within the intelligence community. While Leanid Yerin, the head of the KGB, reportedly met with protestors in 2004, there do not appear to have been similar meetings in 2006.<sup>131</sup> During the course of the demonstrations, in fact, KGB representatives had declared that demonstrators risked arrest as terrorists and could face the death penalty.<sup>132</sup>

### **Belarus: Analysis**

The Lukashenko regime had clearly taken note of the circumstances surrounding the recent downfalls of other regimes in the region. As other scholars have noted, the 2006 Belarusian elections offer a clear example of how regimes, too, can learn from recent

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and began plunging into the crowd in platoon-sized formations, separating it into smaller groups that were then forced to move away." Lukashenko Stamps Out Protests (2006).

<sup>129</sup> Kim Murphy, "Arrests Climb to 1,000 in Downtown Belarus," *The Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 2006. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2006/mar/29/world/fg-belarus29>

<sup>130</sup> Veronica Khokhlova, "Belarus & Russia: Traffic Police Stories," *Global Voices Online*, blog post, April 18, 2006. Retrieved from <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2006/04/18/belarus-russia-traffic-police-stories/>

<sup>131</sup> Way and Levitskym (2006).

<sup>132</sup> Adrian Blomfield, "Protests Planned against Belarus Vote: The Opposition Knows it Will not Win Sunday's Election, But it Welcomes the Chance to Spread its Message," *The Daily Telegraph*, March 17, 2006. Retrieved from Lexis Nexis.

history.<sup>133</sup> In 2006, Lukashenko took early steps that made it very difficult for challengers to change the balance of relative legitimacy, significantly alter the calculus of cost, or make their success appear inevitable. The regime's preemptive steps during the run-up to and following the election undermined challengers' capacity to mobilize numbers, reach out to new constituencies, communicate effectively with security force communities, or convey effective messages about the illegitimacy of the regime.

Within the security institutions, recent changes included bolstered crowd control tactics and legislation permitting "police to shoot street protesters when the president deems necessary."<sup>134</sup> In an apparent attempt to bolster the constitutional authority of any orders to this effect, in 2005 Lukashenko changed the oath of office for Interior Ministry personnel to pledge allegiance to Lukashenko himself, rather than the state or constitution.<sup>135</sup>

Lukashenko was able to maintain considerable support in Belarus' villages and rural areas, strongholds that also served as pools for recruitment into the security forces.<sup>136</sup> In 2001, a majority of the population had reported feeling nostalgia for communist rule, and a significant proportion actively favoring an authoritarian leader. Polls had revealed that

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<sup>133</sup>Josh Tucker writes that "just as pro-democracy forces have learned from past experiences, so too can leaders of quasi-authoritarian regimes." Joshua Tucker, "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Colored Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics* 5, No. 3: 537-553; This point is also raised by Paul D'Aneiri. D'Aneiri (2006).

<sup>134</sup> Vitali Silitski, "Is the Age of Post-Electoral Revolutions Over?" *Democracy at Large* 1, No. 4. Retrieved from <http://www.ifes.org/dalArticle.html?dalid=vol1no4>

<sup>135</sup> Ethan Burger and Viktor Minchuk, "Alyaksandr Lukashenka's Consolidation of Power," In *Prospects for Democracy in Belarus*, ed. Joerg Forbrig, David Marples, and Pavol Demes (Washington, D.C.: The German Marshall Fund, 2006) 34.

<sup>136</sup> Steven Lee Myers, "Incumbent Remains Popular in Heartland's Rural Villages," *The New York Times*, March 20, 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/20/international/europe/20village.html> ; See also Lukashenko Stamps Out Protests (2006).

Lukashenko would have been the victor then, even in a free and fair race.<sup>137</sup> Now, in 2006, while Lukashenko's popularity had diminished, support from the villages might nonetheless have carried him through. External analysts believed that he might have won fairly even if the race had been run cleanly.<sup>138</sup> There do not appear to have been systematic attempts by challengers to reach out to security force communities within the rural regions.

In Belarus in 2006, as others had before them, challengers attempted to leverage election fraud to prompt a crisis in regime legitimacy. Milinkevich initiated the demonstrations with the bold statement that "what is going on today is the seizure of power by unconstitutional means."<sup>139</sup> The OSCE did declare the vote count "highly problematic", noting that "results [were] completed in pencil in many cases, and observers... prevented from seeing the marks on the ballot."<sup>140</sup> There was anecdotal evidence of "stuffed ballot boxes, pre-marked ballots distributed to voters, and vote-count protocols signed before election day."<sup>141</sup> However, restrictions on elections monitors and the barring of exit polls limited the impact of the intended blow to regime legitimacy.<sup>142</sup> A media blackout on election day further hindered the spread of news.<sup>143</sup> Fraud was thus neither as clear or as widely- publicized as it had been elsewhere.

Challengers had also had difficulty establishing their own relative legitimacy. Lack of media access played a role, particularly in light of the aggressive propaganda

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<sup>137</sup> Vitali Silitsky, "Preempting Democracy: The Case of Belarus," *Journal of Democracy* 16, No. 4, October 2005; S. White, E. Korosteleva, and J. Löwenhardt, *Postcommunist Belarus*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield: 2005).

<sup>138</sup> Lubos Palata, "Lukashenka Could Win Fair Polls, But was Too Scared to Try - Czech Comment," *Lidove Novin*, February 33, 2006.

<sup>139</sup> Myers and Chivers (2006).

<sup>140</sup> Lukashenko Stamps Out Protests (2006).

<sup>141</sup> Silitski (2005).

<sup>142</sup> Silitski (2005).

<sup>143</sup> Marples (2006).

campaign waged by the regime to discredit the opposition. Within the heavily indoctrinated security forces, there may also have been a sense that opposition politicians did not share their values. One former general, General Valeri Fralou, had emerged in 2000-2003 at the forefront of the political opposition, and might have been poised to develop the connections and messaging needed to persuade security forces of the legitimacy of the opposition's cause. General Fralou ultimately joined Kazulin's camp, but does not appear to have played an active role in soliciting security force support.

On the streets, relations between challengers and Interior Ministry forces varied. As in other cases, demonstrators periodically broke into positive chants, such as "the police are with us." However there were also negative interactions between demonstrators and special forces – one elderly woman summed up crowd antipathy towards the Interior Ministry forces in a comment that "these special forces — they are black cockroaches...they are hirelings. My parents were oppressed. I am oppressed. I hate this power."<sup>144</sup>

Kazulin's decision to channel this sentiment in his March 25<sup>th</sup> march on the jail may have been a tactical misstep. While it was clearly an attempt to show strength and increase the costs of the recent set of arrests, the action provided pretext for a brutal crackdown. Belarusian Interior Minister Uladzimir Navumaw later described police actions as "appropriate" and necessary to ensure law and order in light of Kazulin's alleged call "for the head of state to be killed and power to be seized".<sup>145</sup> State media echoed his charge, stating that "today, the ex-candidates who lost the elections call on a storm of state offices, the forced seizure of power and a push to bloodshed in the streets

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<sup>144</sup> Vitali Silitski, "Valeri Fralou: Crying in the Wilderness," *Transitions Online*, October 19, 2004.

<sup>145</sup> "Belarus Interior Minister: Crackdown on Opposition 'Appropriate,'" *Interfax-Ukraine*, March 25, 2006.

of Minsk.<sup>146</sup> Thus, despite the efforts of civil society organizers to reduce legitimate concerns about public order – as in Ukraine, alcohol had been prohibited – the regime was able to shape the narrative of the event as a response to challengers’ “provocative” actions, rather than unwarranted repression.<sup>147</sup>

Ultimately, the march also revealed a key opposition weakness – internal disunity. Unlike Ukraine, where Yulia Timoshenko’s approach was checked by clear leadership and messaging from Yushchenko, there was division within the ranks in Belarus. Milinkevich later publicly chided Kazulin for the action, declaring that a march on a secure building was unnecessarily provocative, and arguing instead that citizens should mass in public spaces. Milinkevich stated that he was "categorically against such actions....it is important for us to show that we are not aggressive, that we are for only peaceful acts. Then we attract more people and we can grow."<sup>148</sup>

In addition to offering the regime an excuse, costs of repression were also mitigated by a lack of domestic media exposure. The only newspaper that covered an assault on Kuzulin soon had all 250,000 copies of the edition confiscated by Belarusian authorities. Account-free dialup internet access was cut off in the Belarus capital, limiting direct reporting by participants.<sup>149</sup> While some international media were present on the square, this factor does not appear to have deterred the authorities from initiating arrests and ultimately cracking down on Saturday the 25th.<sup>150</sup>

Unlike the regimes in Ukraine and Serbia, Belarusian authorities were confident—

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<sup>146</sup> C. J. Chivers, “Belarus Police Deter Thousands of Protestors,” *The New York Times*, March 26, 2006.

<sup>147</sup> Forbig, Marples, and Demes (2006) 105.

<sup>148</sup> Chivers (2006).

<sup>149</sup> Andrei Khrapavitski, “Internet Access Limited,” *Belarusian American Blog*, blog post, March 25, 2006. Retrieved from [http://belarus.blogspot.com/2006/03/](http://belarus.blogspot.com/2006/03/http://belarus.blogspot.com/2006/03/)

<sup>150</sup> Forbig, Marples, and Demes (2006) 109.

correctly so – that they could disperse the crowds without the use of lethal force. As Way and Levitsky note, “successful low intensity coercion means that regime leaders do not have to engage in high intensity coercion that is much more likely to attract unwanted attention.”<sup>151</sup> Police thus attempted to minimize the costs of arrests by detaining demonstrators “one by one so there is no forceful attempt to clear the square while the television cameras are here,” as one Milinkevich advisor observed.<sup>152</sup> Notably, most arrests occurred in evening, when numbers were low – between 2,000 and 3,000 – or when demonstrators were traveling to and from the square.<sup>153</sup> (Recall that in Ukraine, by contrast, challengers were able to maintain crowds of up to 200,000 during the night when a crackdown might have taken place.) When police did confront the masses on Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup>, most demonstrators dispersed quickly. Those that remained were “beaten heavily with batons by police who fired teargas and stun grenades into the crowd.”<sup>154</sup>

Russian support for the Lukashenko regime diminished the impact of the diplomatic blow that Western nations had intended to impose on perpetrators of repression. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov publicly criticized media reports of police brutality as overwrought, stating that “I would not call the scenes I saw on TV today the use of force.”<sup>155</sup> While the threat of punitive diplomatic sanctions by the West may have played a role in decision-making in Ukraine, they appear to have been largely brushed off by

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<sup>151</sup> Way and Levitsky (2006).

<sup>152</sup> Myers and Chivers (2006)

<sup>153</sup> David Marples, “The Presidential Election Campaign: An Analysis,” In *Prospects for Democracy in Belarus*, ed. Joerg Forbrig, David Marples, and Pavol Demes (Washington, D.C.: The German Marshall Fund, 2006) 99.

<sup>154</sup> Nick Patton Walsh, “Belarus Protest Turns Bloody,” *The Observer*, March 26, 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/mar/26/nickpatonwalsh.theobserver>

<sup>155</sup> “Belarusian Police Arrest Journalists, Block Coverage in Rally Crackdown,” *Committee to Protect Journalists*, March 24, 2006. Retrieved from <http://cpj.org/2006/03/belarusian-police-arrest-journalists-block-coverag.php>

members of the isolated, Russia-centric regime. A list of several dozen officials from the security sector and elsewhere were banned from travel in Europe.<sup>156</sup> Lukashenko seemed unfazed, dismissing the European Union and the United States as teetering "on the verge of anti-Belarusian hysteria."<sup>157</sup>

If the costs of repression were mitigated, the costs of accommodation were likely still significant for those in uniform. Other analysts have also noted that the regime had successfully raised the "costs of disobedience" for "the general public, and for state employees in particular."<sup>158</sup> While there is little evidence available about the costs of defection for members of security forces, it appears that some physical force was used within elite military units at least, where reports emerged in 2008 of a young soldier's alleged death due to a severe beating.<sup>159</sup> Treason carries a sentence of up to fifteen years in prison.<sup>160</sup>

Finally and perhaps most significantly, security forces would never have felt that there was a significant likelihood that challengers would succeed in gaining power. Like Kyrgyzstan, the 2006 Belarusian protests did represent a significant departure from the norm – as observers noted, it was the first time during the course of the Lukashenko regime that challengers had successfully sustained demonstrations.<sup>161</sup> However, recognizing that challengers' center of gravity lay in the ability to mobilize the masses,

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<sup>156</sup> C. J. Chivers, "Europe Bars its Doors to Belarus President and 30 Officials," *The New York Times*, April 11, 2006.

<sup>157</sup> Milan Horacek, "Sanctions for Lukashenka's Regime!" In *Prospects for Democracy in Belarus*, ed. Joerg Forbrig, David Marples, and Pavol Demes (Washington, D.C.: The German Marshall Fund, 2006), 186.

<sup>158</sup> Silitski (2005) 92.

<sup>159</sup> "Scandal in Belarusian Army: Soldier of Elite Military Unit Died after Beating," *Charter '97*, April 16, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.charter97.org/en/news/2008/4/16/5822/>

<sup>160</sup> "Belarus Says Ring Spying For Poland Uncovered," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, July 16, 2007. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1077639.html>

<sup>161</sup> Myers and Chivers (2006).

the regime had dealt powerful preemptive blows to civil society infrastructure in the nascent stages of their mobilization efforts. Human rights groups, umbrella NGOs supporting grassroots initiatives, and independent media sources were all targeted.<sup>162</sup>

With little capacity to mobilize opposition support in the villages, participation was relatively narrow, primarily limited to students, intelligensia, and political elites. Demonstrations, based primarily in the capital, “were not significant enough to disrupt the normal working of the country: they were concentrated in Minsk, and echoed only vaguely in other regional cities (and hardly at all in rural areas).<sup>163</sup> Unlike Serbia where the march to the capital from the villages offered a critical boost to participation levels, challengers in Belarus were unable to rally the numbers of people that would make repression seem unthinkable and challenger success inevitable. In part this was due to intimidation – Milinkevich's campaign manager, Sergei Kalyakin, said, “The number who came to the square was not enough,” he said. “We need 10 times more.”<sup>164</sup>

Scholars such as Ioulia Shukan have highlighted the problems that low-level coercion imposes on learning processes within the ranks of challengers.<sup>165</sup> While in Ukraine, challengers had the opportunity to refine tactics based on the lessons of 2000, Shukan writes, in Belarus, “oppositional actors were deprived of means necessary to prepare their revolution, to experiment with collective action, shape and build citizens’ participation.”<sup>166</sup> Thus when the opposition made calls for citizens to rally on the streets,

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<sup>162</sup> Silitsky (2006) 91.

<sup>163</sup> Margot Letain, “The ‘Denim Revolution’: A Glass Half Full,” *Open Democracy*, October 04, 2006. Retrieved from [http://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-institutions\\_government/denim\\_3441.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-institutions_government/denim_3441.jsp)

<sup>164</sup> C. J. Chivers and Steven Lee Myers, “U.S. Calls Belarus Vote for Leader Invalid,” *The New York Times*, March 21, 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/21/international/europe/21belarus.html>

<sup>165</sup> Ioulia Shukan, *The Orange Revolution: Reflections About a Successful Strategy of Collective Action*, Paper presented at Association for the Study of Nationalities, 2007 World Convention, April 2007.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

they did not have the same preexisting networks that organizers had relied upon in Ukraine and Serbia.<sup>167</sup>

The tactics employed by the regime had thus weakened the strongest instrument that challengers had in strengthening their likelihood of success. A civil society leader in Belarus similarly commented that “in Ukraine they had pro-opposition radio stations. There was an opposition in parliament and the level of repression and fear was much lower.”<sup>168</sup> Media restrictions also offered significant obstacles to mobilization, as it was difficult for opposition organizers to circulate information about their intended actions.<sup>169</sup> Instead supporters relied on “small meetings, e-mail messages and fliers.”<sup>170</sup> Intimidation also suppressed mobilization efforts – as another source reported, “students have been threatened with expulsion and workers with dismissal for participating in opposition events.”<sup>171</sup> The arrests of two prominent civil society and political leaders active in social mobilization – Mikalaj Statkevich, chairman of the Social Democratic Party, and Pavel Seviarynec, leader of the Young Front movement had been additional blows.<sup>172</sup>

Within the ranks of challengers, lack of unity further detracted from perceived likelihood of success. Despite the United Opposition coalition’s drive to stand up a single candidate, Alyaksandr Milinkevich, five other opposition candidates also competed in the early stages of the elections.<sup>173</sup> Differences in tactical decisionmaking between Kazulin and Milinkevich on the ground have already been discussed – more broadly,

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<sup>167</sup> Myers and Chivers (2006).

<sup>168</sup> Bloomfield (2006).

<sup>169</sup> International Press Institute, “World Press Freedom Review: Belarus,” 2006. Retrieved from [http://www.freemedia.at/cms/ipi/freedom\\_detail.html?country=/KW0001/KW0003/KW0050/&year=2006](http://www.freemedia.at/cms/ipi/freedom_detail.html?country=/KW0001/KW0003/KW0050/&year=2006)

<sup>170</sup> Chivers (2006).

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Silitsky (2005).

<sup>173</sup> Marples (2006) 357.

analysts have concluded that the political campaign of Kuzulin may have hurt Milinkevich's prospects at victory<sup>174</sup>

Ultimately, it appears, both challengers and the security forces observing them recognized that they were unlikely to unseat the regime. Milinkevich had frequently stated publicly that the opposition's objective was not to defeat Lukashenko, but to assert challengers' power and weaken the regime.<sup>175</sup> He also conceded early in the demonstrations that "I think that the dictatorship will fall, not on the day of elections...I can't say when, but I feel its days are coming to an end."<sup>176</sup>

The Belarusian case highlights how roadblocks imposed by a regime may influence challengers capacity to successfully achieve the strategic objectives proposed in this study. However, these roadblocks are not necessarily determinative. Scholar Lucan Way makes a trenchant observation when he notes that Lukashenko's "extraordinary success at preventing the emergence of a powerful opposition using low intensity coercion will not necessarily translate into a capacity for high intensity coercion should the opposition be able to pull off a large and sustained protest demonstration."<sup>177</sup> Interestingly, Way concludes that if challengers are able to mobilize enough strength to force a high-stakes confrontation, "the regime in Belarus is likely to collapse."<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Marples writes: "it is debatable whether the campaign of Kazulin helped or hindered that of Milinkevich." Marples (2006) 357.

<sup>175</sup> András Rácz, "The Self-Dividing Belarusian Opposition," *EuroJournal.org*, June 04, 2007. Retrieved from [http://www.eurojournal.org/more.php?id=231\\_0\\_1\\_0\\_M](http://www.eurojournal.org/more.php?id=231_0_1_0_M)

<sup>176</sup> Chivers and Myers (2006).

<sup>177</sup> Way and Levitsky (2006), 397.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid. 389.

## **Uzbekistan**

Finally, a study on challenger interactions with security forces would be incomplete without discussion of the factors underlying a worst-case scenario. The 2005 Andijan massacre, during which up to 750 civilians were gunned down by Uzbek police and army units, provides a difficult but instructive case to that contrasts with more successful outcomes elsewhere. The Uzbek case also differs from previous cases in the objectives of challengers and the permissiveness of the environment in which they operated.

The details of the case remain murky – a fact that has worked to the advantage of the Uzbek regime. The episode began in February 2005 when 23 local businessmen from the Andijan region were put on trial for religious extremism and connections with the radical group *Akramiya*. Initial demonstrations organized in response have been described as “remarkably well-organized, with participants contributing to supply food and drink, as well as wooden benches” and were allowed to take place unmolested by the authorities.<sup>179</sup> About 3000 demonstrators were active by mid-May.<sup>180</sup>

Events took a violent turn on the night of May 12, when state security officers arrested a number of participants, allegedly beating and torturing them.<sup>181</sup> Crowds from the participants’ communities quickly congregated in response, of which a group – reportedly armed – took over police stations and freed the defendants and hundreds of others.<sup>182</sup> The crowd also reportedly attacked a military brigade, seizing armaments,

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<sup>179</sup> International Crisis Group, “Uzbekistan: The Andijon Uprising,” Asia Briefing, No. 38, 25 May 2005.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid. See also Jenny Norton, “After the Violence, Fear in Andijan,” May 24, 2005. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4576585.stm> Norton cites one policeman’s statement: “We beat them so hard that even their own mothers would not recognize them. We beat some of them to death.”

<sup>182</sup> International Crisis Group (2005).

bullets and hand grenades.<sup>183</sup> The armed group then unsuccessfully attempted to seize the regional state security headquarters.<sup>184</sup>

Regime responses were brutal. The first live ammunition used again civilians was reportedly fired the following morning at about 6AM.<sup>185</sup> Despite the incident, crowds continued growing over the course of May 13 in response to announcements that president Karamov would address the crowd. By early evening, according to one account, about 10,000-15,000 demonstrators had gathered in the Andijan town square.<sup>186</sup>

Between 5pm and 6pm, a full-fledged assault began. Vehicles including military jeeps, Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs), and military trucks “approached the square at various times from different direction.”<sup>187</sup> Sniper fire reportedly rained down from the roofs.<sup>188</sup> Troops sealed off “all the roads leading away from the square so there was only one direction for the people to run.”<sup>189</sup> More panicked civilians were shot as they attempted to escape across Kyrgyz border, 40 km away.

Between 200 and 750 civilians were killed, depending on reports.<sup>190</sup> One officer who reportedly leaked his version of the incident to a reporter said that the scale of the massacre was due to the use of the APCs, fitted with 14.5 mm heavy machine guns.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> International Crisis Group (2005); Rustam Burnashev and Irina Chernykh, “Changes in Uzbekistan’s Military Policy after the Andijan Events,” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, No. 1 (2007) 67-73. Retrieved from online at:

[www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/CEF/Quarterly/February\\_2007/Burnashev\\_Chernykh.pdf](http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/CEF/Quarterly/February_2007/Burnashev_Chernykh.pdf)

<sup>184</sup> International Crisis Group (2005).

<sup>185</sup> *Report From the OSCE/ODIHR Trial Monitoring In Uzbekistan: September/October 2005*. Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR. April 21 2006.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> International Crisis Group (2005).

<sup>190</sup> The International Crisis Group writes that as many as 750 may have been killed, though official Uzbek accounts report a lower death toll. Uzbekistan. International Crisis Group (2005).

<sup>191</sup> Dilya Usmanova, “Andijan: A Policeman’s Account,” *IWPR*, June 24, 2005. Retrieved from <http://muslimuzbekistan.net/en/centralasia/comments/detail.php?ID=1177>

Evidence found on the scene corroborated the machine gun use.<sup>192</sup> The nature of many of the wounds also indicated that they had been inflicted by highly-trained and heavily armed units.<sup>193</sup>

Most reports remain vague about the identities of the forces that took part in the evening massacre.<sup>194</sup> The *New York Times* reports that Interior Ministry counterterrorism units “BARS” and “Skorpion” were involved.<sup>195</sup> Another account reports that 12,500 security force members were deployed, and in addition to BARS, the “17th air-assault brigade and a battalion of specialized operations from the Eastern military district; a brigade of rapid reaction forces … [and] four separate units of Special Forces of the National Security Service.”<sup>196</sup> This would corroborate with survivor accounts: “The soldiers shot at us in Chulpon Street and in the village of Teshiktosh. We didn’t see any [regional] police or police commanders.”<sup>197</sup>

While the vast majority of the forces involved in the crisis fully complied with orders, there do appear to have been some small-scale loyalty shifts. One resident recalled later that on May 13, she saw “police in civilian dress and with white armbands,” and noted

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid. According to this account, “Many bodies had been ripped into several pieces, in a manner consistent with the impact of a heavy projectile. And human rights activists on the ground gathered up numerous spent shell casings, unmistakable because of their size.”

<sup>193</sup> Roger McDermott, “Implications of the Andijan Crackdown for US Security Assistance,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 2, No. 99, May 2005. Retrieved from [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=30430](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=30430); McDermott writes that the “accuracy with which some of the victims were shot, suggests that it was not the work of young inexperienced conscripts, hurriedly rushed into the town, but rather that of professional or more skilled combat-ready soldiers from specialist units.”

<sup>194</sup> McDermott (2005). The report notes that “reporting has been quite vague on the precise nature of the units involved in the massacre, preferring to use phrases such as “government troops” or “security forces.”

<sup>195</sup> C. J. Chivers and Thom Shanker, “Uzbek Ministries in Crackdown Received U.S. Aid,” *The New York Times*, June 18, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/18/international/asia/18uzbekistan.html?pagewanted=print>

<sup>196</sup> Burnashev and Chernykh (2007) 67-73.

<sup>197</sup> Daniel Kimmage, “Uzbekistan: Andijon Residents Speak About The Trials,” *RFE/RL*, December 17, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/pp121705.shtml>

that "you could see on the faces of many police that they were being forced to do their work."<sup>198</sup>

### **Uzbekistan: Analysis**

Uzbek challengers were unable to achieve the strategic objectives proposed in this study. Some obstacles had been imposed by the regime, considered fully authoritarian by analysts of the region. The use of troops from outside the region minimized the social costs of repression, as well as opportunities for the challengers to persuade security forces of their relative legitimacy through informal channels of communication. Challengers were also successfully marginalized by the regime, which used the violent actions of some members of the challengers' group to cast the episode as an anti-terrorist mission and challengers as radical extremists. While it appears that some positive relationships existed with local police forces, there never seems to have been a strategic effort made to cultivate the levels of support necessary to engender large-scale loyalty shifts.

At the peak of the crisis, challengers appeared to understand the significance of loyalty shifts. Some appeals were explicitly made on May 12<sup>th</sup> to members of the security forces – Hazratqul Xudoyberdi a member of the opposition, reportedly issued a call for "members of the ordinary National Security Service and Interior Ministry personnel, army soldiers, and sergeants" to join the ranks of the demonstrators. However, his appeal gained little traction. Despite reports that some police officers appeared to want to join the protestors, others continued to threaten the crowd and ultimately cooperated with orders.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

There do appear to have been some differences between the behaviors of local police and forces from Tashkent brought in for the massacre. Torture of the arrested on the night of May 12 was allegedly undertaken by a group of officers brought in from Tashkent.<sup>200</sup> Some positive relationship appears to have been struck with regional Interior Ministry Dilmurod Oqmirzaev who was reportedly a "good police officer" according to one participant,<sup>201</sup> One IWPR interviewee later recalled that "units were sent in from Tashkent, while the locally-based police force which also falls under the ministry's control played a lesser role" in the shootings.<sup>202</sup> An elderly resident of Andijan told the same journalist the police "conducted themselves honorably" during the demonstrations.<sup>203</sup> However, unlike Ukraine –where troops had also been bussed into Kiev from another region – Uzbek challengers were unable to develop a strong enough support within the local police to elicit potential counterbalancing or even public defections by the time the crisis peaked.<sup>204</sup>

Part of this was undoubtedly due to the high costs of defection for local security forces. After the Andijan events, those police on duty on the night of May 12 were accused of dereliction of duty for permitting the takeover of police stations, and were subsequently put on trial.<sup>205</sup> Second, the government's use of additional troops also strengthened the potential costs of loyalty shifts. One police officer interviewed at the time said that he and his local colleagues openly acknowledged of the officers from

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<sup>200</sup> Usmanova (2005).

<sup>201</sup> Kimmage (2005).

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Not a direct quote. "When our children were on trial, the police and their commanding officers were in the area," one source said, "We didn't see them do anything bad." Kimmage (2005).

<sup>204</sup> Jeffrey Donovan, "Former Uzbek Spy Accuses Government of Massacres, Seeks Asylum," RFE/RL, September 01, 2008. Retrieved from

[http://www.rferl.org/content/Former\\_Uzbek\\_Spy\\_Seeks\\_Asylum/1195372.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Former_Uzbek_Spy_Seeks_Asylum/1195372.html)

<sup>205</sup> Kimmage (2005).

Tashkent: “we are afraid of them ourselves, as they look so fearful.”<sup>206</sup> Third, clear orders coming from Tashkent put obedience in starkly binary terms. Unlike Ukraine and Serbia, where ambiguity shrouded the source of alleged orders to mobilize, President Karimov was reported to have personally commanded the action.<sup>207</sup> His position was likely a function of relatively high perceived costs of accommodation, in light of the recent Tulip revolution in Kyrgyzstan, and his confidence that he could mitigate the costs of repression by blaming the violence on outlawed Islamic groups. Although Karimov later denied that he had issued such orders, the clarity of the chain of command at the time would have made foot dragging or disregard of orders particularly difficult.<sup>208</sup>

The regime was also fairly successful in its attempts to marginalize participants by framing the events within the context of a broader Islamicist threat. For those units brought in from Tashkent and elsewhere, recent missions to address this threat may well have strengthened their resolve in the light of otherwise abhorrent orders in Andijan. Sources reported that the Interior Ministry units engaged at Andijan had previously been particularly active in combating guerillas in the region connected with the al-Qaida-affiliated Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (MIU), based in the Fergana valley.<sup>209</sup> The previous spring, a “neo-MIU” had been linked to a “series of bombings, suicide bombings, and shoot-outs in Bukhara and Tashkent”<sup>210</sup> Recent history had possibly

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<sup>206</sup> Usmanova (2005).

<sup>207</sup> Donovan (2008).

<sup>208</sup> Mark Franchetti and Alexei Volosevich, “200 Reported Dead as Shooting Goes on in Uzbekistan Protests,” *The Sunday Times*, May 15, 2005. The article states that Karimov told a press conference that “nobody ordered troops to fire at them,” acknowledging that 10 soldiers and “many more” protesters had been killed.

<sup>209</sup> Douglas Frantz “Guerrilla Attacks Raise Worries in Central Asia” *The New York Times*, September 6, 2000; <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/18/international/asia/18uzbekistan.html?pagewanted=all>

<sup>210</sup> “Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) (Uzbekistan),” *Jane’s World Insurgency and Terrorism*, March 10, 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.janes.com/articles/Janes-World-Insurgency-and-Terrorism/Islamic-Movement-of-Uzbekistan-IMU-Uzbekistan.html>

inured troops to the use of violence. They may well have considered the Andijan events as part of a broader counterinsurgency strategy.

Conflating the demonstrators' actions in Andijan with the threats posed by the MIU and other Islamic groups allowed the regimes to present challengers as a radical fringe, rather than representative of the broader Uzbek population. Though many factors were admittedly out of the hands of challengers, the escalation of violent events of the night of May 12 did appear to bolster the regime's position. As the Stratfor intelligence service notes, "a key difference between the velvet revolutions and the events in Andijan... is that the latter essentially constituted a rebellion in which armed groups initiated the violence by directly engaging government forces."<sup>211</sup> Multiple versions of the events exist – some believe that the actions were instigated by regime provocateurs attempting to create a pretext for repression, while others argue that challengers themselves initiated the attacks on the police and military installations. Regardless, despite the reportedly well-organized and nonviolent nature of the demonstrations that had preceded and followed them, violent actions on the night of May 12 appear to have compromised the moral claims of participants.

Although the tactics were publicly in a subsequent Human Rights Watch report, the regime appears to have been generally successful in projecting their version of the events abroad.<sup>212</sup> Many of the narratives emerging from the events emphasize the violence that preceded the crackdown. From Russia, predictably, officials stated that the events were

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<sup>211</sup> "Uzbekistan: Desperate Moves at a Turning Point," *Stratfor*. May 14, 2005. Retrieved from [http://www.stratfor.com/uzbekistan\\_desperate\\_moves\\_turning\\_point](http://www.stratfor.com/uzbekistan_desperate_moves_turning_point)

<sup>212</sup>The Uzbek government is using widespread repression and abuse to manipulate the truth, so that it can depict the protest itself as violent – organized by "terrorists" with a radical Islamic agenda and with the participation of mostly armed protestors – and suppress any evidence to the contrary, and shift the blame for the deaths of so many unarmed people. Human Rights Watch, *Burying the Truth: Uzbekistan Rewrites the Story of the Andijan Massacre*, D1706. UNHCR Refworld. September 19, 2005. Retrieved April 25, 2009 from available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/43ba858b4.html>

without a doubt the result of a "terrorist attack."<sup>213</sup> Russian special service officers later assisted the Uzbek government in their "investigation" of the massacre, for which the Uzbek government publicly thanked them.<sup>214</sup>

Even in the West, interpretations of the repression were significantly influenced by the violence that preceded it. Some initial media accounts of the events reported that challengers had initiated the violence.<sup>215</sup> While the US government criticized the crackdown, Stratfor noted that US statements "implicitly criticized the leaders of the uprising by saying Uzbeks should pursue more freedom peacefully."<sup>216</sup> The perception that regime violence – while excessive – was perhaps not entirely unprovoked was also revealed in a comment by one Carnegie Endowment scholar after she observed a film of the events that "the regime had lost control... That doesn't speak to defend the Uzbek [authorities'] response but [the film] gives me a strong sense there was a security threat."<sup>217</sup>

Restricted media access further contributed to a lack of clarity surrounding the events, obfuscating the extent of the massacre. The regime took careful precautions to limit the access of domestic and foreign media. One source recalls that the region was "almost sealed off as telephone links were blocked. A government broadcast warned that 'all

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<sup>213</sup> Sergei Kislyak and Dmitriy Kirsanov, "Deputy Russian Minister Says Terrorists Unrest in Andijan Staged by Terrorists," *ITAR-TASS*, May 28, 2005. Retrieved from World News Connection.

<sup>214</sup> Igor Plugatarev, "The FSB Spetsnaz Landed in the Caspian: Russian FSB Chief Interviewed on Caspian Anti-terrorist Exercises," *Neza Visimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, August 27, 2005. Retrieved from World News Connection.

<sup>215</sup> The violence began late last week when a large group of militants attacked a police station, seizing a number of weapons. The armed insurgents then stormed a prison, freeing 23 men who were on trial accused of religious extremism and 2,000 other prisoners.

<sup>216</sup> Uzbekistan (2005).

<sup>217</sup> Lionel Beehner, *Documenting Andijan* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2006) Retrieved from [http://www.cfr.org/publication/10984/documenting\\_andijan.html?breadcrumb=%2Fregion%2F264%2Fcentral\\_asia](http://www.cfr.org/publication/10984/documenting_andijan.html?breadcrumb=%2Fregion%2F264%2Fcentral_asia)

journalists and visitors should leave within 30 minutes.”<sup>218</sup> Foreign television channels inside the country were jammed.<sup>219</sup> Because of the media blockade, some early reports indicated that only a few participants – gunman involved in the attacks on security facilities – were killed.<sup>220</sup> Police initially denied that women and children were among the victims.<sup>221</sup> It was only after survivors were interviewed by journalists and human rights organizations in neighboring Kyrgyzstan that the full horror of the events began to be revealed.

As noted above, a delegitimized opposition using forceful tactics may have reduced the costs to security forces of killing children. One minister claimed afterwards that women and children had been soaked in gasoline and used as human shields to allow the groups to leave buildings.<sup>222</sup> However unlikely this account, Western sources too implicitly cast the participation of women and children as passive victims of their own people. One report stated that: “hostages were put in the front row. The second group was bigger and included men, women and children. Women and children *were placed* in the middle of the crowd.”<sup>223</sup> By presenting some participants as pawns, rather than active agents, these accounts effectively implicated challengers in their deaths.

Perceptions had practical implications for the costs of repression. Internationally, while an arms embargo and sanctions were imposed by European nations, one of the most targeted sanctions –a visa ban placed on key Uzbek officials – was not fully implemented. In

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<sup>218</sup> Franchetti and Volosevich (2005).

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> “Uzbek President Says About 30 Killed in Violence,” *Agence France Press*, May 14, 2005.

<sup>221</sup> When asked if there were any women and children among casualties, he flatly said “no” but did not allow us to go inside. Reza Hossaini, “An Eyewitness Account from Andijan,” *Unicef.org*, May 24, 2005. Retrieved from [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uzbekistan\\_27132.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uzbekistan_27132.html)

<sup>222</sup> Vladimir Zainetdinov, “Uzbekistan: Official Claims Extremists in Andijan Used Women, Children as Shields,” *ITAR-TASS*, May 18, 2005.

<sup>223</sup> Report From the OSCE/ODIHR (2006).

September, amidst criticism from human rights organizations, Germany allowed Interior Minister Zokirjon Almatov, who was heavily involved in the massacre, to visit a Hanover hospital.<sup>224</sup> Domestically, although there was some initial unrest following the events, narratives have since emphasized alleged terrorist connections of the *Akramiya* group and justified repressive actions as necessary to respond to external threats.<sup>225</sup> Confessions – likely forced – stated that external powers trained challengers to “simulate ‘popular protest’... and confirmed that part of the firearms used during the unrest had been brought from Kyrgyzstan.”<sup>226</sup> The official account of the events is reportedly generally accepted by the population.<sup>227</sup>

Finally, the probability that challengers might successfully assume power never really seemed to play a role in security force decision-making. Events were focused within a narrow community in Andijan, challengers did not bring new constituencies into the struggle or achieve a breadth that would have bolstered their legitimacy and increased their perceived prospects for success. Unlike the successful Colored Revolutions, which used elections as a rallying point, there was also no unifying objective around which a critical mass of the Uzbek population might mobilize. The issue around which Andijan residents rallied – the incarceration of local business owners on accusations of Islamic

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<sup>224</sup>“Andijan Victims Let Down by German Ruling,” *IWPR*, February 9, 2000

<sup>225</sup>Joshua Kucera, “Uzbekistan: The Wounds of Andijan Remain Fresh,” *Eurasia Insight*, October 16, 2007. Kucera quotes from the book; “In the last years, some destructive outside forces began to display unfriendliness towards Uzbekistan which has an important strategic location...Using different methods, they try to realize their improper intentions. Now it’s publicly known that ‘colored revolutions,’ happened in some CIS countries, are directly connected with their activity. The same forces, using extremist organizations, performed an act of terrorism in Andijan on the 12th-13th of May, 2005.”

<sup>226</sup>“Uzbekistan: Andijon ‘Mutiny’ Participant Admits to Being Trained in Kyrgyzstan,” *ITAR-TASS*, September 22, 2005,

<sup>227</sup>Kucera (2007). Kucera writes: “This theory is commonly held in Andijan, even among ordinary people.” And cites one interviewee as stating that ‘A lot of people think that the United States gave guns to Akramiya.’

extremism – did not offer a compelling motive nationwide. It also did not offer the kind of blow that raised a regime change scenario.

While it appears from comments that there may have been some local police officers who left their posts, the significant degree of cohesion shown by security forces strengthened the government’s position and restricted the challengers’ probabilities of success. No cascade of defections was initiated, and with a unified force, the regime was quickly able to halt challengers’ momentum.

## **Conclusion**

The struggle for relative legitimacy appears to have been relevant in each of the four cases. In Georgia, where challengers followed a strategic model similar to those in employed in Serbia and later in Ukraine, opposition elements worked hard to cultivate perceptions of legitimacy with members of the security forces. Long-term efforts by civil society groups to undermine the legitimacy of the Shevardnadze, paired with evidence of election irregularities, contributed to a crisis of legitimacy for the regime. There also appear to have been intensive efforts to connect with Georgian security forces during the run-up to the elections, which likely helped to convince security forces that there was a palatable, viable alternative to the status quo. On the other hand, relative legitimacy seems to have played a role in the Belarusian opposition’s persistent inability to unseat Lukashenko, whose popularity in the provinces remained largely unshaken during the 2006 demonstrations. In Uzbekistan, while the regime in power was likely unpopular, the opposition’s credibility was severely undermined by credible claims of extremism and violence.

Kyrgyzstan is the anomaly. Rioting during the course of the demonstrations and the lack of a credible mandate severely marred challenger claims to legitimacy. Neither did not there appear to have been consistent efforts to undermine regime legitimacy. And violence was used by opposition forces. Nonetheless, the opposition prevailed and security forces stood down in the face of the challenge. A number of factors can go a long way in explaining why this seemingly outlier case can still instruct this paper's analysis. The geographically dispersed nature of the challenge may have helped to counteract lack of support for opposition tactics or legal legitimacy by at least demonstrating broader popular support than had previous standoffs. Additionally, while the campaigns undertaken by the Kyrgyz opposition were nowhere near as sophisticated as those used elsewhere, the clumsy attempts of Akaev to seat his family and friends in positions of power appears to have done much of the opposition leaders' work for them. Low popularity levels of the incumbent due to blatant corruption and election irregularities throughout the parliamentary campaign, paired with leadership unwilling to fight to stay in power, may thus have rendered the uneven appeal of challengers less relevant.

Costs of repression, determined in part by the existence of plausible pretexts for crackdowns and the threat of media exposure, also appear to have been correlated to implementation of orders to repress in the additional four episodes. In Georgia, media and international attention kept a close watch on the events, raising the costs considerably. In Uzbekistan, on the other hand, where media access was strictly limited and where the government was able to frame its action internally as a response to challenger aggression, authorities did not incur significant costs as a result of their

actions. In Belarus, media restrictions and the chaos instigated by an opposition member's march on the jail were also used by the regime to mitigate negative popular responses to the repression. Once again, Kyrgyzstan offers a different perspective, as challenger violence might well have offered the regime a pretext for violence, had it wanted to crack down. In this case, the memory of popular responses to previous acts of government repression three years earlier may have contributed to reluctance along the chain of command even had Akaev ordered a lethal crackdown. The Kyrgyz case also included security forces who were likely intimidated by the threat of physical harm.

Costs of accommodation imposed by the regime are difficult to accurately assess without interviewing security force members, but there is some evidence based on media reports that in Uzbekistan, at least, local Andijan police officers feared elite units brought in from the capital. In Kyrgyzstan, where officers did defect, costs imposed by the regime may well have been reduced due to ambivalence at the top of the chain of command about the use of force.

Challenger attempts to allay fears about the costs that they might impose did not correlate as closely to successes or failures as might be hypothesized from the Serbian and Ukrainian cases. In Belarus, security forces engaged in repression despite (albeit sporadic) attempts by challengers to allay their concerns. In Kyrgyzstan, police defected despite the fact that many were physically attacked by demonstrators. While there were some news reports of participants shielding police officers in the Kyrgyz case, other reports of beatings at the hands of angry mobs certainly might have elicited a self-defense response and increased the risks of escalation.

Finally, factors contributing to the perceived likelihood of challenger success appeared, perhaps unsurprisingly, to be very strongly correlated to challengers' successes or failures in eliciting security force loyalty shifts. Cited by scholars as a significant factor in success, unity appears to have played a role in Serbia and Ukraine by boosting perceptions of challengers' prospects of success.<sup>228</sup> Similarly, in Georgia, while the political opposition was less unified prior to the crisis than in successful episodes in Serbia or Ukraine, cooperation between civil society and political opposition youth wings had helped to boost the perceived prospects of success throughout the campaign. Additionally, other opposition leaders' support for Saakashvili at the critical moment of his charge into Parliament strengthened their position. The solidarity exhibited by the political opposition in Georgia bears a striking contrast to the response of the Belarusian opposition, where one faction lambasted another's decision initiate a march on the Minsk prison.

More generally, challengers' ability to unite and mobilize a broad coalition of citizens around a common objective certainly appears to have correlated to successes or failures in eliciting security force defections. As was the case in Serbia and Ukraine, Georgian challengers' abilities to mobilize new constituencies around a unified cause appeared to be closely correlated to success in eliciting loyalty shifts. In Georgia, challengers followed a similar strategy to that pursued by activists and opposition parties in Serbia in 2000. Civil society groups and opposition parties coordinated over the course of the campaign to build a strong network of supporters that transcended traditional age and class boundaries. In Kyrgyzstan, as well, while the efforts do not appear to have been as consciously planned as in other cases, the events of March 2005 represented the first time

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<sup>228</sup> McFaul (2005); Ackerman and Karatnycky (2005).

that challenges to the government had been mounted from both the northern and southern regions of the country. One might speculate that the nation-wide dispersion of protest was a particularly relevant factor for security forces. Movement breadth likely increased perceived likelihoods of success, despite the relatively low numbers of participants mobilized – perhaps 100,000 in Georgia and no more than 50,000 in Kyrgyzstan – far smaller than the crowds mustered in Serbia or Ukraine.

Challengers unable to coalesce new social networks around a broadly unifying objective did not fare as well. In Uzbekistan by contrast, the narrow participation of the community rallying in Andijan both made it easier to marginalize victims of repression and meant that challengers never had a realistic chance of attaining power, had they been aiming for it. Similarly, in Belarus, Lukashenko’s ability to maintain traditional support bases in rural regions likely undermined challenger claims to represent the will of the Belarusian population and detracted from their perceived prospects of success.

## **Conclusion**

This study offers new contributions to the existing body of research on popular uprisings. In addition to unearthing details and analysis on the internal dynamics of security force responses in Serbia, Ukraine, and four additional post-communist countries, it proposes a unique framework through which future scholarly inquiry might be directed. The four additional episodes examined in the previous chapter offer perspectives on the relevance and implications of the proposed strategic objectives in contexts beyond Serbia and Ukraine, and suggest that the proposed set of objectives may remain a valuable prism through which to parse the often-complicated details of an episode of popular nonviolent struggle.

Rather than reiterate findings summarized in the preceding pages, this conclusion will look ahead to consider potential future directions for scholarly research, policymaking, and diplomacy. Further research examining additional cases and factors through the theoretical prism proposed in Chapter 1 might help to determine the extent to which the study's findings may be generalized within more broadly varying political, cultural and institutional environments. The study also sheds light on a number of issues and questions relevant to today's policy world. As external actors attempt to predict, and sometimes to assist in, the bloodless outcomes of internal political crises abroad, a clear understanding of the relevant dynamics at play is critical. The conclusion's final section draws from study findings to offer ten potential propositions for officials and diplomats developing policy towards countries in the midst of civic-driven transition.

## **Directions for Further Research**

The frameworks and findings of this study suggest an analytical springboard for future scholars examining the interactions between security forces and popular movements. Further research might build on the work undertaken here by opening up the set of cases to include those outside of the post-communist sphere. Analysis of additional cases in Chapter 4 offered broader variation, but some factors were held relatively constant for all of the episodes chosen. In each of the cases, security forces operated within post-communist institutional systems characterized by strong interior ministries, state intelligence services descended from their communist counterparts, and conscription-based militaries. Case selection was intended to reduce some variation, focusing analysis on the primary study variable – challenger efforts and ability to fulfill the five strategic objectives laid out in Chapter 1. Future studies might devote more explicit attention to a broader range political, cultural, and institutional factors, and assess the degree to which they inhibit or assist the efforts of challengers.

Political factors surrounding elections, civil-military structures, and legal systems, offer one additional set of variables. One key question that emerges is how challengers have been able to operate within a broader range of political systems variables to trigger crises in legitimacy. The successful cases examined in this paper centered on fraudulent elections as the crisis point around which events unfolded. Future studies might look beyond the electoral revolution model to identify and assess cases in which the political systems did not provide opportunities to expose election fraud. While the research touched on other triggers for regime illegitimacy – losses in war, exposed corruption, and

declining economic standards – it would be interesting to examine more closely any successful cases where the ballot box did not provide a catalyst for mobilization.

Civil-military power structures within different political systems merit closer examination as well. Significant variations in civil-military relations – for example, military regimes – would likely yield different imperatives and considerations for individuals in uniform. Future studies might focus on security force responses within failed and successful cases under military dictators and assess the extent to which various strategic objectives were achieved and were relevant.<sup>1</sup>

Varying legal systems and norms might also be assessed through the frameworks provided in this study. While some of the cases in this study touch upon the implications of legal codes for the costs of repression – in Ukraine for example, where legal reforms and recent trials of the Gongadze murders were fresh in the minds of police officers – examination of the influence of legal codes and norms on security forces elsewhere might aid understanding of how legal factors influence preferences and costs, of the environment in which challengers operate,

Cultural factors are also likely to be relevant in the implementation of the strategic objectives proposed in this study. Cultural and ethnic contexts might also be assessed to determine their impact on security force decision-making. A broader pool of cases including countries from different regions of the world could offer insights into the roles played by underlying cultural norms. For example, a prevailing theme in the cases examined was popular affection for the military, tempered by skepticism of interior police forces. In a nation where bonds between the military and the broader population

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<sup>1</sup> For analysis of the Burma and Philippines cases, see Kurt Schock, *Unarmed Insurrection: People Power in Nondemocracies* University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

are weaker, it would be interesting to see whether the preferences of the military rank-and-file might be easier for a regime to mold. Shared ethnic, religious, or cultural identity is also likely to play a role in the degree of affinity that security forces feel with challengers. In Serbia, police officers who had engaged in human rights abuses against other ethnic groups in Kosovo or elsewhere balked when asked to use violence against their fellow Serbs. In Uzbekistan, by contrast, the ability of the government to portray challengers as Islamic extremists significantly undermined any legitimacy or common bond that security forces might have felt. And in Ukraine, Russian-speaking officers from the East were far less sympathetic to the Orange cause than were those from the Western part of the country, who had embraced Ukrainian national culture.

The study additionally opened up questions about the impact of institutional cultures and norms on security forces behavior. It is an area that might benefit from further exploration. Assumptions perpetuated within security organizations are likely to play a significant role in determining perceptions of relative legitimacy and, more broadly, the extent to which normative considerations influence decision-making at all. This factor was already apparent in some of the different institutions examined in this study: in units where indoctrination levels were high, challengers had little success making normative claims. More broadly, the implications of strong institutional norms emphasizing obedience and discouraging individualism merit further inquiry in light of the examples of individual decision-making considered in this study. It might be particularly interesting to contrast the effects of such values across different institutions, ranks, and units.

Finally, the theoretical lenses proposed in this study provide a new prism through which to gauge the efficacy of external actors' efforts to impact the outcome of civic uprisings. Although the primary emphasis of this work is the role of challenger strategy, further research might explore more deeply the role of external actors in influencing a crisis' internal dynamics. The following section proposing a few potential policy implications drawn from the study's findings.

### **Policy Implications**

The framework and conclusions presented in this study yield implications for foreign policy-makers addressing popular civic uprisings. While limitations to our understanding of security force decision-making may inherently exist, some general implications may be extrapolated from the cases reviewed. Given the typically opaque nature of security institutions, granular analysis of interactions between and within security forces provided in this study may help future analysts to identify indicators and patterns of loyalty shifts. Linking challenger strategy to security force loyalty shifts by tracing through battles for relative legitimacy, relative costs, and perceived prospects of success may shed also light on ongoing struggles. Below are ten propositions derived from study findings.

First – and perhaps most significantly – the contributions of external actors may be limited by effects that assistance may have on the struggle for relative legitimacy. Given a movement's need to establish internal legitimacy and undermine that of the existing regime, it is critical that outside actors – and particularly foreign governments – recognize that sometimes well-intended assistance may negatively affect challengers relative positions in this struggle. The issue may be particularly acute within the context

of the loyalty of security forces that are trained to defend their nation from threats, external or internal. As this study highlighted in numerous cases, external assistance is often used by regimes as a propaganda tool to leverage concerns about external threats. History is replete with examples of regimes leveraging perceived external threats to initiate a “rally-round-the-flag” dynamic, bolstering regime legitimacy, or to de-legitimize the efforts of challengers. Struggles for security force loyalty are thus most likely to succeed if they are perceived to be waged by local actors.

A second proposition addresses external efforts to reinforce democratic norms within security forces. In this study, the significance of the struggle for relative legitimacy, and the role of norms and values more generally, varied from case to case. External assistance programs emphasizing democratic practices within partner militaries and interior ministries may help to make such norms a more prominent element of security force decision-making. Well before an uprising, training and exchange programs – such NATO’s Partnership for Peace program, US IMET training, the FBI’s ICITAP police programs – can help encourage democratic values and civil-military relations. They may make considerations of relative legitimacy more relevant throughout the chains of command. A second observation, then, is that such programs can reinforce the role of normative considerations amidst the utilitarian calculations necessarily made by individuals operating within authoritarian or semi-authoritarian systems. Less formally, the individual relationships between embassy attaches and officers within various security forces were also sometimes cited as influential in reinforcing democratic norms. Systematic assessment of the efficacy of these programs and interactions is beyond the scope of this study, but would make for useful further research.

A third policy-relevant proposition is that short-term assistance helping to expose fraudulent elections can contribute to a crisis in regime legitimacy, sometimes eliciting security force loyalty shifts. Cascades of loyalty shifts are more likely to take place once challengers are able to trigger a discrete crisis to regime legitimacy. Election assistance – external observers and training and funding of local observers – helped bring about the crisis point that prompted initial defectors. Additional research of successful cases beyond the electoral revolution model would be useful, but it does appear that in the cases examined, exposure of electoral fraud proved an important breaking point for some actors within the security forces. While alone not a sufficient factor, training civil society activists in election monitoring techniques – and attempting to send external monitors to observe elections – seems to be a worthwhile endeavor.

A fourth finding is that new skills and knowledge can offer challengers an edge in the competition for security force loyalty. Lessons from previous cases – both in their own countries and elsewhere – helped challengers in Serbia, Ukraine and Georgia to more effectively compete against the regimes in power. External actors contributed to new skills and knowledge in each case, highlighting a potentially powerful form of assistance. The success of specific techniques and tactics are likely to vary between contexts, and regimes may become increasingly savvy about countermeasures. But by sharing best practices – for example, by training civil society groups in nonviolent crowd control – external actors can contribute significantly to challengers' ability to contribute to conditions conducive to security force loyalty shifts.

Failed cases in Belarus and in Serbia (1996) reveal that exposure of election fraud is itself insufficient to elicit large-scale security force loyalty shifts. A fifth lesson is that

any democracy assistance should also contribute to the long-term capacity of civil society to bind together grassroots communities across geographic and social lines. Without a strong and diverse civil society coalition, opposition activists may be seen as unrepresentative of the general population and unlikely to succeed. Short-term, ad hoc training may not accomplish this task. Over the longer term, programs that encourage cooperation across a variety of issues can help develop the bonds of coordination that become crucial during the critical days and hours of an episode of nonviolent challenge.

A sixth relevant finding is the important role of media and other communications technologies in conveying strategic messages to members of the security forces, mobilizing populations, and raising the potential costs of repression. Illiberal regimes usually recognize the power of media exposure, and often take measures to minimize challengers' access to mass communication. In light of tightened repressive measures by other regimes since the Colored Revolutions, development assistance that supports alternative methods of communication and can help to overcome barriers erected by a regime may be particularly significant. Such assistance has already begun to push new frontiers, through social networking media, internet communications, and mobile technology. Careful research is necessary to understand how local messages are most effectively conveyed within a particular society, and assistance tailored towards individual circumstances.

Seventh, warnings imposed by external actors can help to alter utilitarian calculations of the potential costs surrounding repression. In regimes that value connections to the West, such as Ukraine and Georgia, western actors were able to leverage their relationships with individuals at the higher ranks of the chains of command to pressure

them to avoid crackdowns. In some cases, quiet threats of targeted diplomatic sanctions and lists of would-be perpetrators raised the potential costs for individuals. High-level attention to episodes of political crisis helped to increase exposure and accountability, further raising its potential costs. Cultivating relationships and maintaining open lines of communication with security force leaderships, while offering clear messages from embassies and from foreign capitals that repression is unacceptable may help to raise the individual costs of issuing orders for repression.

Eighth, recognizing that fear of exposure may be a deterrent for individuals contemplating early loyalty shifts, there may be potentially important roles for diplomats, military attaches or others interacting with security forces to facilitate communication. Senior diplomats interviewed for this study reported that officers they were in touch with sometimes seemed comfortable communicating their reservations about the regime in power to embassy officials. There are also examples of meetings and dinner parties that provided opportunities for sympathetic officers from various security forces to mingle with each other and sometimes with members of the opposition. By lowering the costs of such interactions, embassies can serve as a gathering point for ideas and actors.<sup>2</sup>

The issue of perceived post-transition costs raises a ninth set of policy questions. Given that individuals who have the most to lose from a transition are often the most dangerous, it may be worth considering the potential role of external actors in offering alternatives to repression. For example, further research could assess the impact upon security forces of charging regime leaders with international war crimes before a transition takes place. Similarly, the provision of alternative incentives – as was the case

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<sup>2</sup> “A Diplomat’s Handbook For Democracy Development Support” Council for the Community of Democracies, 2008. Online at: <http://www.diplomatshandbook.org/pdf/Diplomat's%20Handbook.pdf>

for Marcos in the Philippines – might be considered. Without ignoring exigencies of local and international justice, the potential role of external actors in mitigating the costs of permitting an opposition victory warrants further study.

A tenth relevant observation to emerge from interviews in this study is that security forces' perceptions of challengers' likelihood of success are often influenced by the positions taken by external parties. When the United States or another powerful actor is viewed as supportive of the status quo, as was the case in Serbia in 1996/1997, soldiers and police officers may discount the likelihood of an imminent change in leadership. On the other hand, when influential powers indicate that they do not believe the regime is likely to survive security forces may pick up on those cues. For example, in the midst of Georgia's Rose Revolution, the decision of Russian foreign minister Ivanov to meet with opposition leaders before meeting with Shevardnadze was closely observed by members of the security forces.

Eleventh, and finally, recognition that security forces are not monolithic, that it may take only a few key defections to initiate a cascade, and that security forces may sometimes even counterbalance each other, has implications for how external actors and opposition groups interact with members of the security forces. It may not be necessary to create a loyalty shift in a unit likely to remain loyal to the regime, because the momentum of events will change actors' calculus about a possible crackdown. Relationships with a variety of elements of a state's security forces are thus likely to be useful in facilitating bloodless outcomes to political crises. Diplomats and policymakers interviewed for this study recognized that different institutions would likely respond

differently to internal political crisis. With this in mind training on how to most effectively develop relationships and networks within a variety of areas of security forces

Ultimately, as has been observed throughout this study, the success of popular nonviolent challengers in influencing the perspectives and calculations of individuals in uniform is largely dependent upon their own strategies, actions, and ability to exploit opportunity. However, to the extent that external powers can play a role, better comprehension of the dynamics of civilian-based resistance and potential responses by security forces may help to strengthen the effectiveness of any contributions to bloodless democratic transitions. At the very least, it may help those on the sidelines to more accurately predict the outcome of the struggle.

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