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# Yanukovych Promises to Improve Russian Ties

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KIEV — Ukrainian opposition leader Viktor Yanukovych, who lost the 2004 election, predicted Thursday that he would win the presidency in January and said he would make improving ties with Russia a priority.

Buoyed by a pledge of support from billionaire Rinat Akhmetov for his campaign for the Jan. 17 election, Yanukovich said he and his Party of Regions would end economic "chaos" and bring greater stability to push through reform. "We have faith in the wisdom of the Ukrainian nation, and we will win," he told reporters. "The question is only whether [we will win] in the first round or the second."

Russia's Black Sea Fleet accused Ukrainian court marshals of trying to seize its property in Sevastopol on Thursday, in a typical incident reflecting tensions ahead of the election.

Yanukovych has about 25 percent support in opinion polls, while his main rival, Prime

Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, has about 15 percent.

“The task is how to re-establish relations with Russia based on equal partnership,” Yanukovych said.

But he avoided details on how he would revamp relations.

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