

Ukraine to split from RUSSIA Moscow PLACES

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the *Independent*
17 July 1990

Ukraine adopts RUSSIA PLACES hard-line stance UKRAINE with Moscow

THE Ukraine — the second most important Soviet republic after Russia itself — yesterday followed the Baltic example by issuing a declaration of sovereignty that envisages the creation of a separate Ukrainian army.

The parliament in Kiev voted by an overwhelming majority to proclaim "supremacy, independence and indivisibility of the republic's power on its territory, and its independence and equality in external relations". Ukrainian laws will now take precedence over Soviet ones.

The Ukraine now claims the right to have its "own armed forces, interior security troops and state security bodies". Ukrainian citizens, the declaration states, will serve in the army on the republic's territory and "cannot be deployed outside the republic without permission from the Ukrainian parliament".

The sovereignty declaration also describes the republic as a "permanently neutral state, not participating in military blocs, and adhering to three principles: not to produce, spread or use nuclear weapons". The green fields of the Ukraine bristle with Soviet nuclear missiles, and Moscow has no

From Imre Karacs
in Moscow and
Susan Viets in Kiev

intention of removing them. The Ukrainian parliament adopted an equally hard line on economic relations with Moscow, with the declaration calling for the creation of an independent monetary system.

The central bank's first task will be to mint the national currency. The Ukraine also reserves the right to "demand compensation for damages caused to the republic's ecology by union bodies", an obvious reference to Chernobyl, situated in the north of the republic — which has fuelled anti-Moscow sentiments.

But while the republic has now gone as far as Lithuania in terms of control over its own affairs and resources, the Ukrainian parliament indicated that it was not yet about to embark on the secessionist road. The sovereignty declaration recognises dual citizenship. Those living in the Ukraine will be Ukrainian and Soviet citizens at the same time.

Nevertheless, President Gorbachev will not take kindly to the Ukraine's new military status.

IND. 17 JUL 90
Even the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe, desperate to cut the last link connecting to Moscow, have not gone as far as declaring neutrality.

And the Soviet leader is to be even less amused by the declaration submitted to the Kiev parliament yesterday that Vladimir Ivashko, deputy general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, stripped of Ukrainian citizenship by Mr Gorbachev took a lot of trouble installing the Ukrainian deputy, partly to placate the union's most important non-Russian nation.

The Ukraine provides 15 per cent of the Soviet Union's natural produce and possesses some of its largest coalfields. Large quantities of iron ore and electricity also come from the Ukraine.

Demands for an independent Ukrainian army were toned down in the final version, which asserts the Ukraine's "right to its own armed forces". Mikailo Horyn, a Rukh leader and member of the Ukrainian parliament, expressed satisfaction with the declaration, which is supported by a clear majority of Communist members of the Ukraine's Communist

The West German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl (left), listens to President

nated parliament. Small groups waving the national blue-and-yellow Ukrainian flag gathered outside parliament to celebrate the sovereignty decision.

ans had been waiting for this declaration for 300 years, but warned: "It's not independence yet, we still have lots of ground to cover and many obstacles still stand in the way."

One sceptic said that Ukraini-