

# The Ukraine's Call to Arms

A fundamental challenge to Gorbachev's power

**M**ikhail Gorbachev told the Ukraine not to do it. In a speech last week he warned that the republics' attempts to take over installations of the Soviet armed forces on their territory were "unserious, irresponsible, illegitimate and illegal." But the admonition fell on deaf ears in Kiev. The very next day the Ukrainian parliament approved measures to create its own army, navy and air force, eventually totaling as many as 420,000 men and women. "Orders keep coming from Moscow

demanding that the withdrawing Soviet Army leave behind weapons and matériel for use in the republic's ongoing conflict with Armenia. Even a staunch defender of the union such as Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, has suggested some nuclear weapons might be left on Kazakh soil to deny Russia a monopoly on them. And defense is not the only issue. Two weeks ago the Ukraine refused to sign a Soviet agreement designed to create a "single economic space." And Kiev will not send delegates to the new Supreme Soviet meeting in Moscow.

The Ukraine still remains committed to abolishing all nuclear weapons on its territory including 176 intercontinental ballistic missiles and a nuclear navy. But it insists that such weapons may be removed from the Ukraine only in order to be destroyed. "The Ukraine must be master of plans to liquidate weapons," said Ukrainian opposition leader Igor Yukhonorov. In the meantime, Ukrainian leaders are talking of demanding a "second key" to Gorbachev's black briefcase giving the republic shared control over the weapons. "It's not going to be like before, when the center kept us in the dark," said parliamentary defense committee chief Vasyl Dyrdenets. "Now we'll have all the facts about strategic forces."

Setting up an army is easier said than done. The Ukraine will start this fall to attract the first recruits for a 30,000 man republican guard, designed as an elite force within the army.

to stop the drive to create a national Ukrainian army," the new Ukrainian minister of defense, Konstantin Morozov, told the parliament in Kiev. "This makes our military units tense, but in the long run the Ukraine will have its national defense."

**National guards:** For Gorbachev, the dismemberment of the Soviet Army is untenable. "You can't be a president without an army," said an aide. "I think [Gorbachev] will fight this one to the bitter end." The Ukrainians are not his only adversaries. In the wake of the August coup, most republics declared their intentions to establish at least a national guard to protect their own governments. Now Azerbaijan has started

But taking over old assets of the Soviet armed forces could prove trickier. Founding the navy will require delicate negotiation, since the Black Sea Fleet comprises vessels shared among the Ukraine, Russia and Georgia, which all border on the sea. And producing weapons will also prove difficult in a republic whose defense factories largely depend on neighbors for some production inputs. Many Ukrainians sense the practical problems. "I like the idea of a Ukrainian army," said Ludmila Kostyuk, a Kiev resident. "But where will they find cloth to make the new uniforms?"

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