



Parliament has openly discussed the need to "protect the interests" of the large Russian populations in eastern and southern Ukraine. According to the same criteria, Ukraine could rightfully lay claim to some tracts of Siberia where Ukrainians make up more than 60% of the populace since their repression by Stalin.

Russia is actively fostering regional separatist movements in Ukraine through financial support, and through visits by high-profile Russian leaders such as Alexander Rutskoi, who encouraged civil disobedience and a separation referendum. This is blatant meddling in the internal affairs of Ukraine, and it is not clear why the Ukrainian government has not reacted more sharply.

Since independence, Ukraine has been systematically demobilizing and restructuring its armed forces from 500,000 men down to 225,000, in keeping with its budget and defense needs. It has more than lived up to international agreements by disposing of its tactical nuclear warheads ahead of schedule in July 1992. Since it had no means for destroying the warheads on its own territory, Ukraine was forced to send them to Russia, which proceeded to sell the nuclear material to the West for hard currency, and Ukraine has not yet been compensated.

Ukraine's economy helped to finance the building of the massive Soviet war machine. Therefore, it has a legitimate claim to an equitable portion of all Soviet military as well as other assets. However, Russia is procrastinating on resolving the issue. There is increasing concern over the division of ships in the Black Sea Fleet and the future basing of Russian ships. The fleet is operated under joint control and is commanded by Russian Admiral Edouard Baltin on behalf of both nations. Friction is growing in this regard as well. In one incident at the end of May, a ship crewed by Ukrainians raised its national flag. Admiral Baltin decreed that the ship was to be treated as a hostile vessel. The very next day some 32 Ukrainian ships raised the blue and yellow ensign and were also designated as hostile. In response, Ukraine's minister of defence, Konstantyn Morozov threatened to deny

all sustenance to Russian ships berthed in Sevastopol.

In short, events such as these have certainly raised tensions between Ukraine and Russia to a very high level. Ukraine is feeling quite vulnerable because the bulk of the Soviet war machine is in Russian hands, and if attacked, Ukraine would have difficulty in mounting a successful military defence. Therefore, it is understandable that some circles in Ukraine are calling upon their government to not give up their strategic nuclear weapons quite so quickly as a form of insurance against possible Russian aggression. This may well be one of the main reasons why the START treaty has been stalled in the Ukrainian parliament.

Ukraine undeniably has a right to exist and to defend itself. History has shown repeatedly that he who prematurely beats his swords into ploughshares invariably ends up ploughing for those who did not. It is unreasonable to expect Ukraine to unilaterally disarm under international pressure while being threatened by a potentially hostile and well armed neighbour. Despite a reasonably peaceful world there is no talk of unilateral nuclear disarmament in the US, Britain, France, Israel, India, China or Russia. To demand this of Ukraine would be hypocrisy on a grand scale.

Then what is the way out of this potentially dangerous situation? It is clear that Eastern Europe very much needs an economic and political counterbalance to Russia's growing power and influence. Ukraine's population is 52 million versus Russia's 147 million. Therefore, to achieve stability and promote reconstruction in the region, it may be far easier and cheaper to shift our priorities somewhat and accelerate the economic redevelopment of Ukraine. To this end, Ukraine would require much more economic and technical aid from the developed nations than the less than \$5B of real aid which it has received to date. In contrast, Russia has received in excess of \$90B. Of course, any large scale aid program must be coupled to the performance of the Ukrainian government in implementing meaningful reforms.

Most important, the West, and specifically Europe must integrate Ukraine into its political, economic, and defence structures. At least during the transition to a market economy and full recovery, we should extend to Ukraine guarantees of territorial integrity through strong defence pacts and political alliances.

Returning to the issue of nuclear weapons, Ukraine must also be an equal partner in any international nuclear disarmament negotiations and not treated like a child which has found something dangerous. Ukraine is a de-facto nuclear state and must be treated as such. Its scientists and engineers were major players in the development of Soviet nuclear weapons and power reactors. Even if all nuclear warheads were removed from its territory, Ukraine has everything that it needs for their design, manufacture and delivery. Therefore a permanent solution to the problem will be far more complex than just the simple removal of warheads.

Through Chernobyl, Ukraine has had an all too graphic lesson on the horrors of the nuclear genie. Therefore the government of President Kravchuk has been unequivocally against the deployment and use of nuclear weapons, and has been striving towards a nuclear-free status. However it can proceed only if Ukraine's national interests are safeguarded. This is a highly responsible position which can only be lauded. As such, it deserves a constructive and truly creative response from the West.