

UKRAINIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY: Celebrations throughout North America

Illinois

Thoughts on an independent Ukraine

SPRINGFIELD, Ill.— Gov. George H. Ryan proclaimed August 24 as Ukrainian Independence Day in Illinois in recognition of Ukraine's 10th anniversary of independence.

In a proclamation issued back on July 25, the governor noted Ukrainian Americans' "significant role in the progress of Illinois" and their "significant contributions to the advancement of the arts, sciences, business, medicine and education to our state and its citizens."

Ohio

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio on August 24 signed a resolution recognizing August 24 as Ukrainian Independence Commemoration Day in honor of the 10th anniversary of the proclamation of independence approved by the Parliament of Ukraine in 1991.

The resolution noted "the creation of an independent Ukrainian state" and urged "all multicultural communities to join Ohio's Ukrainian community in celebration with appropriate activities and observances."

New Jersey

WOODBIDGE TOWNSHIP, N.J. – James E. McGreevey, the Democratic candidate for governor of New Jersey, issued a "Certificate of Honor" on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Ukraine's independence proclamation.

The document noted that Ukrainians and Ukrainian Americans "dreamed and worked toward the realization of the age-old dream of independence."

by Robert De Lossa

Address delivered at Boston banquet marking the 10th anniversary of Ukraine's independence. Robert De Lossa is president of the American Association for Ukrainian Studies, editor of the Journal of Ukrainian Studies, director of publications at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, and a non-resident research fellow of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta.

The idea of an independent Ukraine is a strange beast. And when people talk about it, one is always reminded of the ancient story of the blind men and the elephant: one man felt the trunk and thought it a snake, another felt a leg and thought it a tree, and so forth. So it is with Ukraine today. Some people see only a part of modern Ukraine and see the potential for religious civil war. Others see another part and see reunification with Russia. Still others see another part and see western Ukrainian secessionism and an insurmountable east-west divide.

None of them see Ukraine as a whole; this intellectual blindness with regard to Ukraine is usually due to an ignorance of its history and culture. Part of the reason for this is because people discount the richness and diversity of Ukrainian history and culture, and because they discount the robustness of the Ukrainian ideal. If one takes any single component of Ukrainian history: the princely era, the Kozak State (the Hetmanate), the experience under Polish-Lithuanian or Russian imperial domination, the period of the Ukrainian National Republic, or even the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Ukrainian SSR) – if you take a single component and project it logically forward to the year 2001, you will not

get modern Ukraine.

None of the periods before 1954 and the Ukrainian SSR will give you the modern territorial configuration of Ukraine. But the Ukrainian SSR – in which the Ukrainian component in Ukraine's own history was viciously suppressed by the central Communist authorities – will not give you a modern Ukraine in which Mazepa could appear on a hryvnia note, Ukrainian soldiers could take part in maneuvers with American soldiers, and Russian speaking Ukrainian fans in Kyiv, during a soccer match between the Ukrainian and Russian teams, would chant "Bei, bei moskalei!" ("Pummel the Moskals!")

We must be comfortable with the fact that Ukraine is a complex country with a complex history and many, many body parts. We must not mistake any one of those body parts for the whole being. And we must not fall into the trap (which many historians espouse right now) that Ukraine has an "abnormal" history. Most modern states have similarly complex histories if you take them in their totality.

So what are we to make of modern, independent Ukraine? It is worth quickly touching on the highlights that lead to modern independence.

The beginning, I think is Chernobyl in 1986. Reading through the literature and talking with Ukrainians about it, it is important in three critical ways. First, people understood from it that they could no longer trust a central authority that was not in Kyiv. Second, it poisoned the land, and reaffirmed the Ukrainian commitment not only to the territory of Ukraine, but the land itself. Third, it poisoned the children. It poisoned the children irrespective of their language and ethnicity. And it became clear to the

people that the Moscow authorities were willing to poison the children (by letting them march in the May Day celebrations) rather than admit their (Moscow's) failings.

This critical event fostered the beginnings of a national movement that became the movement for reform in Ukraine, Rukh. Within the crumbling Soviet Union, this movement began to reaffirm and renew Ukrainian culture, language and self-awareness. It also began to influence the Verkhovna Rada to the point where in July 1990 Ukraine could declare itself a sovereign state within the Soviet Union.

There were freedom movements in other Soviet republics, of course, and there were massacres in Tbilisi and Riga in early 1991. The empire fought back. But the center overplayed its hand in August 1991, when a group of reactionaries sought to turn back time, and initiated a putsch against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. It is clear from the memoirs of Kostiantyn Morozov, Ukraine's first defense minister, that the coup plotters hoped for civil unrest and bloodshed in Ukraine and the imposition of martial law that would frighten the rest of the republics. But they hoped in vain.

In hindsight, Ukraine was somehow ready for the test that the putsch represented. For the first time in a very long time, Ukraine had the right men and women at the right places at the right time: Kravchuk, Morozov, Drach, Pavlychko, Horyn, Chornovil, Yavorivskyi, Dzyuba, Zhulynskyi, and scores of others. The Churches already were re-establishing themselves as an important, open component of public life. The diaspora, nationally conscious in ways impossible for Soviet cit-

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The Washington Group 2001 Leadership Conference

Ukraine : Focus on the Future

October 19 - 21 at the Key Bridge Marriott, Arlington, VA

Conference Schedule

- Friday, October 19**
- 7:00-10:00 Reception at the Embassy of Ukraine
- Saturday, October 20**
- 8:00-9:00 Registration
- 9:00-9:15 Introductory remarks
- 9:15-10:00 Keynote address
- 10:15-11:45 Panel 1: United States Policy toward Ukraine
- 11:45-1:15 Lunch and Address by Hon. Borys Tarasyuk, previous Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
- 1:15-2:45 Panel 2: Ukraine's Integration into the European Community and NATO
- 3:00-4:30 Panel 3: Building Civil Society in Ukraine
- 6:00-7:00 Cocktail hour
- 7:00-9:00 Awards Banquet
- 9:00-12:00 Dance: to the music of Montego
- Sunday, October 21**
- 11:00-1:00 Brunch and Cultural Program featuring Marianna Wynniytsky and Bratny Blood
- 1:00-2:00 "Heartening a Nation: How John Paul II honored Ukraine's Past and Encouraged its Future," a presentation by Rev. Gudziak

Conference Registration Form

Name _____ Profession _____
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Conference Package - admission to all conference events and all meals

| | Before 10/09 | After 10/09 |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| TWG members (dues paid through Oct. 2001) | _____ x \$230 | \$250 _____ |
| All others | _____ x \$265 | \$285 _____ |

If you are not a TWG member or if you have not paid your dues thru October, 2001 the extra \$25 charge will be used to provide you with either a one year associate membership or with an eight month extension of your full membership.

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- Panels only (includes breakfast) _____ x \$135 _____
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- Friday Evening Embassy Reception _____ x \$35 _____
- Saturday Luncheon _____ x \$40 _____
- Banquet and Dance (\$150 per couple) _____ x \$80 _____
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- Dance only (student rate) _____ x \$25 _____
- Sunday Package (Brunch, Cultural Event, and Presentation) _____ x \$50 _____

ENCLOSED SUM

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 By Mail: TWG Leadership Conference, P.O. Box 11248, Washington, DC 20008.
 For more information:
 Ihor Kotlachuk: (703) 548-8534
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 Conference Updates:
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 Call 1-800-228-9290 or 703-524-6400 and ask for special \$159/night TWG rate (guaranteed through September 30).
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