

The Non-Military Security Forces of Ukraine

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Post Soviet states, such as Ukraine, have expanded the number, type and size of their non-military security forces to the extent that they now are larger than the armed forces. Traditional studies of civil-military relations have not covered these non-military forces, which leads to a disjointed picture of security forces in states in the throes of democratisation, such as Ukraine. By studying these forces we can understand the threat perceptions of the ruling elites and how these have changed from external to internal. The study of these forces also shows us how the forces inherited from the former USSR were nationalised and integrated into the newly independent state and how other forces were created or expanded in the course of state building.

Civil-military relations in Ukraine has not attracted the attention of scholars and policy-makers.¹ If this is true of studies of the armed forces,² it is even more the case for studies of the non-military security forces who have been largely ignored. Yet *only* approximately one third of the militarised forces in Ukraine are actually in the armed forces. The remaining two thirds are to be found in units other than the armed forces.

These non-military security forces include:

- Ministry of Interior (MVS): Internal Troops;
- National Guard;
- Security Service: subunits;
- Border Troops;
- Customs Service: subunits;
- Tax Police;³
- Civil Defence;
- National Space Agency;
- State Communications Department;

Many of these militarised formations have poorly defined objectives and their tasks overlap. The National Guard, for example, had functions which

overlapped with those of the armed forces and the MVS internal troops. There has been little systematic attempt to place these militarised units within the overall reform of Ukraine's armed forces in order to redistribute and optimise missions, tasks and resources.⁴

As in many other other post-Soviet countries, state and nation building has been accompanied by two processes.

First, the down-sizing of their armed forces. Ukraine's plans for military reform, for example, envisage that its armed forces will number only 350,000 by 2005. This is down by more than half from the 750,000 inherited in 1992 from the former USSR. The down-sizing of armed forces is, in turn, linked to both the scarcity of financial resources at a time of economic crisis *and* a re-evaluation of security threats.

Second, state building within the post-Soviet states, such as Ukraine, has been accompanied by the growth of inherited non-military security units *as well* as the creation of new units. These traditionally non-military security units are aimed at thwarting new types of threats which their elites now feel exist. New threats are defined as those originating domestically (social unrest and/or ethnic conflict) and in view of the likelihood that any inter-state conflicts are likely to be small-scale (e.g., external intervention in support of ethnic brethren). The non-military security forces in Ukraine (Ministry of Internal Affairs, National Guard and Border Troops) are already larger than the armed forces and therefore warrant closer scrutiny. This article surveys only four of these non-military security forces in Ukraine – those located within the MVS, the militarised units of the Security Services, Border Troops and the National Guard.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVS) Internal Troops

Reform

The government adopted a reform concept for the Internal Troops (VV) on 17 February 1997. Internal Troops are to be reduced in size from 52,000 to 30,000 after units whose function was to guard 120 places of confinement and 200,000 prisoners will be removed. These units will be transferred to the Penitentiary Directorate and to the administrative staff of Medical and Labour Custodial Institutions. These may be eventually transferred under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice. In other words, these former Internal Troops units would become standard prison wardens found in Western liberal democracies. But, their transfer to the Ministry of Justice requires changes in legislation, an end to the use of conscripts and the professionalisation of these prison guards.

A major requirement for the Internal Troops is to obtain an Academy of their own, as they are the only military unit in Ukraine without one (all of

the VV Academies were inherited by Russia). Until now they have utilised the Border Guards Academy in the city of Khmel'nyts'kyi or were trained by the military-juridical faculty of the Ukrainian Academy of Internal Affairs. Plans are afoot to have the MVS Academy in Chernihiv transferred to their jurisdiction.

Reform of the VV would therefore aim to make them leaner and meaner. They would become more mobile and better equipped after the improvement of the Special Motorised Militia Units (SMChM) who were transferred back to them from the National Guard. These would guard important sites, aid public order and help in the struggle against organised crime. This mobility would be helped by obtaining aircraft and helicopters while the VV would also create special dog and horse mounted units. Dog police units will be therefore preserved after being transferred from convoy VV previously involved in the transportation of prisoners.

Internal Troops (VV) – 'Without Fear and Reproach' (VV motto)

When the former USSR disintegrated there was, perhaps understandably, a bias against the Internal Troops (VV) of the MVS. These had been created in 1966 but were, at the same time, regarded as the descendants of the NKVD (Peoples Commissariat for Internal Affairs) troops which had battled against nationalist partisans in western Ukraine and the three Baltic republics during the 1940s. The VV had also guarded the gulag where many dissidents were imprisoned during the Leonid Brezhnev and Yuriy Andropov eras.⁵

The National Guard were therefore created as a unit from scratch between August and December 1991, loyal to the then aspiring Ukrainian state at a time when the loyalty of the VV were still unclear. The VV inherited from their Soviet-era colleagues were units devoted to convoy duties (removed since 1995), mobile motor rifle units, units to guard important enterprises, institutes and nuclear power stations. During the April 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident 18,000 VV personnel took part in the operation to deal with the catastrophe.⁶

The National Guard took from the VV of the MVS all of its Special Motorised Militia Units (SMChM)⁷ used to quell internal public disorder, a unit perceived as a second line of defence after the OMON (in Ukrainian ZMOP) riot police created in 1988. The remaining VV units were used in stationery duties (guarding nuclear power stations, military industrial complex enterprises and prisons) or utilised in convoy duties of prisoners and valuable commodities. These SMChM of the VV were returned to them from the National Guard in accordance with a presidential decree dated 21 July 1994. This decree, called 'On the improvement of methods to increase the struggle against crime', hoped to utilise them in the campaign against in

organised crime and aid militia units in maintaining public order. The National Guard would no longer play any function in dealing with public disorder; this would be left to the Berkut units (successors to the OMON/ZMOP) and the VV SMChM.

The VV began creating spetsnaz (red beret) units in March 1994 based in three locations in Ukraine – Kyiv (Bars), led by Colonel Vasyl Markovskiy, Zaporizhzhia (Jaguar), led by Colonel V. Diomich, and Vinnytsia (Hepard). Each of these three spetsnaz units has responsibility for different regions of Ukraine – Bars (central),⁸ Hepard (western) and Jaguar (eastern).⁹ Southern Ukraine and the Crimea are jointly covered by all three units. Members of these three units sign a contract to serve for five years and are usually expected to possess military experience. They are similar in function to the Dzerzhinsky Division in the Russian Federation. These three spetsnaz units are maintained on alert 24-hours a day in the event of their requirement for operations.

Bars, based in Kyiv, includes four military and one instructor-methodological company (*rota*). The latter includes instructors from a variety of military specialities (armed action, fire, radio technical, underwater, tactical-specialist, medical and others). Bars also has a section devoted to transportation and supplies, which includes aviation, auto transportation, food and technical supplies. Bars has available for its use armoured personnel carriers, aviation, water transportation, automobiles, various types of weapons and specialist technology. As explained by the commander of Bars, Colonel V. Markovskiy, to catch criminals escaping in a Ford car one cannot use Soviet Ladas. Personnel are attracted to Bars, and the other two spetsnaz units of the VV, by higher than average pay, life insurance of 100,000 *hryvna* (around \$200,000 at the 1998 exchange rate) and quality equipment. Candidates have to have previously served in the armed forces, be not older than 25 and taller than 175cm.

As with many other specialist security units in Ukraine, their functions overlap to a considerable degree with the Berkut riot police and the Alpha anti-terrorist unit. These include the protection and transportation of state officials, protection of the transportation of precious goods and provision of aid to the Ministry of Emergencies in the event of catastrophes, such as the Chernobyl nuclear disaster (a role also assigned to the National Guard). In addition, Bars, Hepard and Jaguar – like Alpha and another MVS unit Tytan – also have anti-terrorist training. Often their duties overlap with Berkut, with whom they patrol the streets of cities with high rates of crime.

The Special Motorised Militia Units (SMChM), which are still in their stage of establishment, are to be increased at a time when the 22,000 personnel devoted to prison duties are being separated from the Internal Troops. SMChM units, which have separate bases from the militia and the

National Guard, are regarded as the operational reserve of *oblast* militia leaders. These would be utilised in the event of emergencies (such as natural catastrophes) or in the event of Berkut being unable to cope with civil unrest. Their training would therefore resemble that provided for Berkut. Two SMVChM units have been permanently stationed in the Crimea since 1996.

Military police units, which are also new units that work closely with the Internal Troops, are based in Kyiv, L'viv, Zaporizhzhia and Mykolaiv. Internal Troops are receiving an air arm which will include aircraft and helicopters. Thus far the VV have obtained an airport, two aircraft (AN-72s and AN-74s) and four helicopters (with the likelihood of obtaining two aircraft and eight helicopters more). The creation of an air arm would allow for the transfer of VV units to any Ukrainian region within one hour, ensuring greater mobility and combat readiness. Aircraft and helicopters are therefore always maintained on stand-by. It is also planned to train small groups of expert parachutists for the SMChM. Internal Troops who guard nuclear power stations have established spetsnaz units, 'to quickly react to the changes in the operational situation and to reinforce the guard'. These spetsnaz units will be trained using methods elaborated by the Berkut.

The VV have a staff shortage, as do many of the specialist units in the MVS. No less than 29 per cent of officer positions are either vacant or occupied by warrant officers. It is necessary to annually train new staff, including 250–300 lieutenants. Another problem relates to the physical condition of many conscripts (a product of the poor dietary conditions relating to the country's economic crisis) – during 1996 alone 871 were forced to leave service because of this condition, while another 700 were not psychiatrically passed to be allowed to carry weapons. The VV suffer, like with other security units, from desertion, hazing and hooliganism. Exchanges in experience and training have taken place with Russian Internal Troops, the Carabineer Troops of Moldova, the French National Gendarmery, Czech, Slovak and Romania specialist police units.

Berkut

Berkut are the successors to the OMON (in Ukrainian ZMOP) riot police created in 1988 by then Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in an attempt to deal with the rising tide of civil unrest in the USSR. These were always former soldiers from elite units, such as airborne, who signed up on a contract basis. Well trained in using standard riot control techniques they were meant to forestall the use of the VV who had a propensity to use firearms to quell disorder. Initially Berkut were only deployed in Kyiv, Odesa, Donets'k and L'viv but were then established in each *oblast* centre. Their numbers vary depending on the crime situation and/or population size from anything between 50 and 600 personnel.¹⁰

The function of Berkut was to help the militia in especially serious cases of crime (e.g., raids against mafia groups), the policing of large events such as football matches and concerts and ensuring public order. In a manner similar to Sokil and Tytan units in the MVS, service within the ranks of Berkut is regarded as prestigious because of higher than average pay (paid on time), quality technology (often imported) and in Kyiv and some other cities, the use of imported jeeps. Berkut personnel are also in demand as security guards in private companies and shops where they moonlight to earn extra income.

Sokil

Sokil units of the MVS are attached to regional branches of the Main Directorate on The Struggle Against Organised Crime and Corruption. Sokil units are divided into units of 50–60 personnel. In contrast to Berkut, they are more specialised and their only function is to arrest and search for individuals involved in very serious crimes or members of criminal groups. In addition, Sokil units are trained for anti-terrorist actions, a role which overlaps with that of the Alpha units of the Security Service.¹¹

Usually Sokil personnel have already served for a minimum of three years in the militia, preferably in the Berkut. As an elite unit of the MVS it is not surprising that 10–12 applications are received for each vacant post in the Sokil units. Information about the strength and duties of Sokil units remains secretive.

State Protection Service (DOS)

The DOS of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVS) were established by a government resolution on 10 August 1993 entitled 'On ways to improve the defence of state objectives and other forms of property'. Their function is to protect state and private property, as well as individuals on behalf of the state or on the basis of a commercial contract with private entities.¹²

The DOS has 128,000 personnel divided into 592 units located in 693 bases in nearly all Ukrainian cities and towns. These personnel include 15,000 engineer-technician specialists. They currently defend 90,000 objectives, including 2,360 enterprises, 20,790 shops and commercial ventures, 1,800 banks, 16,375 cash dispensing outlets, 2,877 arms dumps, 910 stores of expensive metals and thousands of private apartments. The DOS are proud to recall that apartments guarded by them have never been broken into.

Unlike other units of the MVS (or especially the Security Service) the DOS are self-financing and do not therefore take any funds from the state budget. As a semi-commercial structure they can be hired to provide security and ensure total protection. DOS personnel have travelled to the

USA, Germany and Hungary for training and they have conducted tenders when deciding to purchase equipment (defensive, specialist automobiles, radio communications and individual arms). They therefore utilise Motorola radio equipment, Volkswagen cars, Comandor automatic weapons, Bereta and Chezetta pistols.

Tytan

Tytan are the spetsnaz units of the State Protection Service (DOS) on a contract service who had earlier served in military spetsnaz units. Their functions are to ensure the security of life and property, both state and private, and guard valuable transports. Unlike the DOU of the Security Service (see below), Tytan units guard state officials, such as *oblast* and city leaders, political activists and members of parliament. When the Kyiv Dynamo football team visit other towns, for example, they utilise Tytan units for protection. Tytan units are utilised to transport especially valuable cargoes, such as currency between banks. They claim to be able to arrive within three minutes of being summoned by those being attacked.¹³

Security Services¹⁴

Directorate of State Defence of Ukraine (DOU)

The DOU has never been a branch of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVS) but its duties are in many ways similar to those of the MVS State Protection Service. The DOU was established by presidential decree on 15 January 1992 and placed directly under the president and were governed by an interim provision until 1996. Its functions are to protect the highest ranking Ukrainian leadership (presidential, parliamentary and government) as well as the official and domestic properties utilised by them. In addition, the DOU also protected foreign dignitaries when they visited Ukraine. It therefore has an analogous role to that played by the US Secret Service.¹⁵

In a similar 1992 vein to the National Security Council (NRB) created by presidential decree in the same year, the NRB and the DOU both had no legal base until 1996. The DOU had always closely co-operated with the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU). It therefore came as no surprise that the DOU was transferred to the SBU in December 1996 after parliament had amended the relevant law on the SBU.¹⁶ The SBU, successor to the KGB of the Ukrainian SSR, has therefore regained its department devoted to the protection of the Ukrainian leadership.

Alpha

On the fifth anniversary of Ukraine's special-purpose subunit of the Security Service (SBU) the commander of Alpha, Major General Oleksandr

Birsan, revealed hitherto unknown details about this shadowy unit. The subunit is the direct successor to the Soviet Alpha unit that stormed the Afghan palace in 1979 which led to a ten-year invasion by Soviet troops. Its motto is revealing – ‘Life for the Fatherland, Respect – For Nobody!’ and the lapel badge has a parachute, common to special forces around the world. In 1994 a presidential edict created Administration A within the SBU which was entrusted with combating terrorism and the protection of witnesses and accused to be brought to court.¹⁷ Similar to Alpha is the Nabat anti-terrorist unit within the MVS.¹⁸

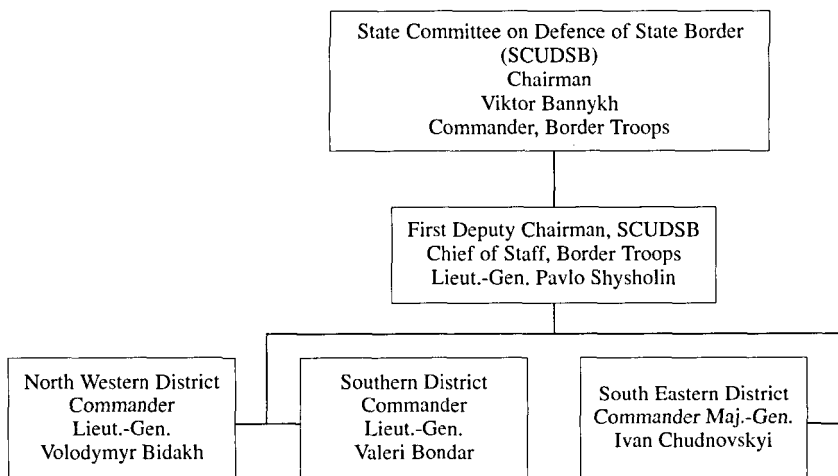
After his compulsory military service Major Birsan, only 44 years old, worked in the Pivdenmash military-industrial complex, then directed by current President Leonid Kuchma. He then went on to work in the KGB and graduated from the KGB Higher School. He was transferred to Directorate Nine which protected high ranking officials. In 1992, when Ukraine became an independent state, he became head of the presidential personal bodyguards. He then went on to become commander of Alpha, the subunit responsible for Combating Terrorism and Protecting Participants in Legal Proceedings.

Birsan admits that his subunit regularly cooperates with the Ministry of Interior unit Berkut and with the Ministry of Interior troops’ Jaguar unit to provide reinforcements during large-scale operations. Commander Birsan is deputy head of the Anti-Terrorist Centre created by presidential edict with the aim of coordinating the numerous security forces working in this field, many of which have also created their own ‘anti-terrorist’ subunits. Parliamentary leaders saw this as an ominous sign because Alpha was to have been used to storm the Russian parliament in August 1991.

Alpha has yet to undertake a single anti-terrorist operation in Ukraine, although it remains trained for such eventualities. Alpha has though been called upon to deal with hostage situations and with high ranking members of organised crime. In 1998 Alpha conducted 110 operations and sustained no losses. Alpha has two combat subunits – Storm and Protection – as well as some support staff plus a unit for operational and technical examination of the operation sites. Alpha subunits exist in all regional (*oblast*) branches of the SBU and in the Crimea. Only 3–4 out of 10 applicants pass the rigorous entrance tests for applicants who have to be no older than 25 and have special forces training. All Alpha units have parachute, mountaineering, sniping and amphibious landing training and train to storm buildings and airplanes. In 1998 they received a training site and test range from the Ministry of Defence near Kyiv. Ukraine’s Alpha subunit works closely with their Russian, French, Israeli, Egyptian, Polish, Hungarian and US counterparts.

Border Troops

FIGURE 1
UKRAINE'S BORDER TROOPS: ORGANISATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



In the USSR Border Troops were organised on a republican-wide basis until 1957, but afterwards were centralised within the Soviet KGB. With the dissolution of the Soviet KGB on 20 September 1991 a reduced number of personnel were transferred to the newly created Security Service of Ukraine (SBU). The newly created SBU did not include the Border Troops who were established two months later on the basis of the former Western district Border Command of the Soviet KGB, 95 per cent of these personnel took the oath of loyalty to Ukraine on 12 January 1992.

As early as 4 November 1991, when the USSR still existed, Ukraine adopted two laws on the 'State Frontier of Ukraine' and on the 'Border Troops of Ukraine'. Articles 27–34 of the law on the 'State Frontier' was devoted to the rights and duties of Border Troops, Air Defence Troops, state bodies, civic organisations and citizens in defending the country's territorial integrity. Article 34 stated that, 'State bodies and voluntary organisations shall assist the Border Troops of Ukraine in encouraging citizens to protect the State Frontier of Ukraine on a voluntary basis'. This permits civic groups, such as the Cossacks, to therefore become involved in border control duties. From 1996 the duties of Border Troops were also extended to protecting Ukrainian embassies abroad. Given diplomatic status they would also be in a position to conduct bilateral cooperation with their host border forces.

The first Commander of Ukraine's Border Troops was General-Lieutenant Valerii Hubenko, a veteran of the USSR Border Troops since 1958. His last post was head of the USSR's Western Border district. Hubenko was appointed on 22 October 1991 to head Ukraine's Border Troops and was transferred the following day from his Soviet post. His first priorities were to nationalise the former Soviet Border Troops on his territory, which was undertaken between November 1991 and January 1992. Henceforth, Ukraine no longer took any instructions from Moscow and independently decided its border policies.

A major problem from the outset was that Ukraine lost access to the Border Troops' centralised material-technical services based in Moscow. Much of their initial equipment therefore came from the Ministry of Internal Affairs Internal Troops who were stripped of equipment and personnel to staff and equip the Border troops and National Guard, established immediately after the declaration of independence in late August 1991.

Ukraine's Border Troops inherited Cold War-era fortifications on its Polish, Slovak, Hungarian and Romanian borders. These have not been dismantled and may become a new 'Iron Curtain' separating Ukraine from new members of the enlarged EU and NATO. On the three remaining new borders with Moldova, Belarus and Russia the establishment of similar fortifications were ruled out for three reasons. First, the cost would be too prohibitive. Second, large numbers of Ukrainians would be against the erection of such Cold War-era borders separating peoples still in the midst of establishing new national identities. Third, the borders would be marked by methods commonly used in liberal democracies (i.e. one or two posts every kilometre demarcating the border – not barbed wire and watch towers).

Although not willing to build Soviet-style borders, the Russian proposal for 'transparent internal' CIS borders was also rejected by Ukraine. Ukraine's midway approach was to guard its own borders based on Western European-style demarcation and delimitation.¹⁹

Nevertheless, in response to the growing security threat of illegal migrants (see later) a border zone was reinstated in May 1994 so that the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVS) and Border Troops could check individuals, 'giving cause for suspicion'. The aim was to prevent illegal migrants waiting in border zones for the opportune moment to illegally cross the Ukrainian border. The former Soviet border zone of 50 km was reduced to only 5 km on land and water, within which individuals required identity documents (originally Ukraine had only a 2 km zone).²⁰

Initially conscripts were sent to the Western Border district and the Moldovan border. The South-Eastern and Southern districts included the bulk of the Ukrainian officers who had previously served in the Soviet Border Troops who had returned to Ukraine from other regions of the former

USSR. On 4 June 1992 the 17,000 Border Troops inherited from the former Western Border District of the USSR KGB, plus the additional 8,000 added by Ukraine from MVS Internal Troops in February 1992, were enlarged by another 11,000 personnel taken from the armed forces (a total of 36,000 personnel). In December of the same year a further 9,000 personnel from the armed forces were added after the decision was made to patrol the Russian-Belarusian border. This brought Ukraine's Border Troops up to a total of 45,000 personnel, a figure which has largely remained to this day.²¹

The best facilities for Ukraine's Border Troops are those inherited from the former Western Border District of the USSR KGB. In this district there are no problems with housing or facilities for Border Troops or Customs officers.²² It does though exhibit similar problems of petrol, cadre and technical shortages that plague the other two border districts. In Ukraine's other two border regions the facilities were fewer (Southern district) or practically non-existent (South Eastern district), as these needed to be constructed from scratch.

The Border Troops include 15 units of ground troops, 2 sea brigades, 3 aviation units, 4 training units and construction personnel. They are divided within three districts with their regional headquarters in L'viv (North Western), Kharkiv (South Eastern) and Odesa (Southern).

Although the Border Troops came into existence on 4 November 1991 it was not until 1 December 1992 year that a presidential decree created their over-sight executive body, the State Committee of Ukraine on Questions of the Defence of the State Border of Ukraine (SCUDSB).²³ The head of the SCUDSB is a member of the Cabinet of Ministers and implements state policies towards Ukraine's borders. In addition, the SCUDSB drafts legislation on border issues, participates in the formulation of security policy through the National Security and Defence Council, organises Ukraine's participation in international border cooperation, coordinates the defence of the country's territorial integrity and ensures observance of the border regime.

In 1992 a Border Troops Academy was established on the basis of a former Soviet Artillery School in the city of Khmel'nyts'kyi, central Ukraine. Its purpose would be to train officers, conduct research and instruct conscripts. The former Artillery School provided a viable technical base and many of its instructors were re-trained to become lecturers in the newly established Border Troops Academy.²⁴ The first group of 552 officers graduated in Spring 1994.²⁵ The Academy has an Academic-Research Centre and four departments:

1. *Specialist*: officers are trained in one of the many branches of the Border Troops.

2. *Masters Programme*: for long-serving officers who wish to obtain higher military education and those who will be sent abroad to man Ukrainian embassies.
3. *Preparation*: Border Troops from foreign states.
4. *Training*: of middle level officers.²⁶

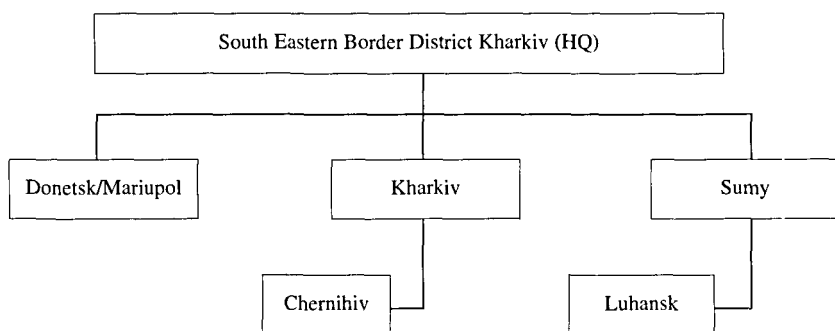
The Border Troops have expanded their specialist units to deal with the growing contingencies they are faced with. On the second anniversary of Ukraine's independence (24 August 1993) the Ukrainian flag was hoisted on 19 ships (green ensigns with blue and yellow national colours and accompanied by a small national symbol). Flags were also simultaneously raised on ships in Kerch, Feodosiya and other Crimean ports. These became the coastguard of the Southern sector of Ukraine's Border Troops.²⁷ The coast guard of the Border Troops possesses a brigade of ships in Kerch, a special division in Yalta, a separate brigade of river cutters and a centre for the preparation of marine experts in Ismail. The Border Troops' main Crimean bases are in Simferopol, capital city of the Crimea, Yalta, Yevpatoria, Kerch and Feodosiya. Contrary to what may have been expected, these Crimean-based Border Troops were not affected by political developments such as separatism, but by the region's reputation for being infested by Ukraine's organised crime.

In August 1995 a 1,000-man rapid reaction force was also created in Kremenchuh, Poltava *oblast*, based upon a former airborne brigade. These 'Border Paratroopers' can be quickly dispatched to any border region of Ukraine to conduct special operations, combat illegal smuggling and deal with border disputes. Border Troops also co-operate closely with the National Guard and the Navy in their defence of Ukraine's territorial integrity.²⁸ The first joint exercise between the Border Troops and Navy was held in Autumn 1996 in defence of the maritime border and maritime economic zone.

Together with Ukraine's other security forces the annual budget has never provided sufficient funds to cover all of the Border Troops' financial needs. A spokesman for the Border Troops, Sergei Astakhov, complained that, 'An impoverished state has trouble reliably protecting its borders. Sometimes we don't even have enough petrol to follow up a call.'²⁹ In 1995 the Border Troops received only 9,500 bn *karbovantsi*, when it required 15,100 bn.³⁰ In 1996 the budgetary outlay was only sufficient for 48 per cent of the Border Troops needs.³¹ As with the armed forces in general, the lack of housing for officers is a major problem with 8,000 officers short of accommodation (half of whom are returnees from other CIS countries).

The South Eastern Sector

FIGURE 2
UKRAINE'S SOUTH-EASTERN BORDER COMMAND



On 1 October 1992 a Russian presidential decree 'On Urgent Measures Pertaining to the Establishment of Customs Control in the Russian Federation' established customs points on its frontier with Ukraine. Twelve days later customs and militia units were posted on the Ukrainian side. Ukraine's newly created South-Eastern district which covers 2,484 km. of the Russian-Ukrainian frontier and was established in January 1993. Its head quarters is in Kharkiv and includes five sub-regional bases throughout the region. The district has a total of 60 checkpoints, including 15 rail, 44 auto and 1 ferry with another 9 to be opened (7 auto and 2 rail). On the less important roads, which are numerous, mobile special patrol Border Troops operate.³²

Although Ukraine never possessed either the funds or the inclination to establish Soviet-era type borders in its new South-Eastern district it was nevertheless still faced with a conundrum. This sector of Ukraine's border accounts for three quarters of border violations (illegal migrants, narcotics and weapons apprehended and confiscated). The lack of inherited infrastructure and facilities has hampered Ukraine's attempts at controlling these border violators. Officers in Sumy, for example, have complained that they could not contact their district's headquarters in Kharkiv except by going through Kyiv.

Initially, there was also confusion over the rights and divisions of duties between Ministry of Interior and Border troop personnel. The Chernihiv sub-base was initially established by personnel transferred from Drohobych in the North Western district but 100 families and officers had no housing and jobs for their wives. In Luhans'k four rooms were initially rented from the military and staffed by officers transferred from Central Asia and the

Caucasus. In both occasions facilities had to be built or renovated from scratch. The 'Donets'k' sub-base is actually based in Mariupol on the Black Sea where it controls the sea and land border in Zaporizhzhia and Donets'k *oblasts*. These Border Troops, as elsewhere in Ukraine, have units deployed in all of the region's airports.³³

The Customs Service

The Customs Service is an invaluable ally of the Border Troops in the struggle to control Ukraine's borders. The Customs Service was established in a hurry between 1991 and 1992 to both demonstrate Ukraine's sovereignty by controlling its borders as well as to aid national security. Leonid Derkach, then head of the State Customs Service, established on the basis of the former State Customs Committee in November 1996, linked it directly to state sovereignty and an institution that all independent states possessed. 'It is one of the most essential symbols of statehood and the political independence of a state. The creation of our custom service was possible because Ukraine obtained independence, regained control over the economy, and started the process of establishing statehood', Derkach argued.³⁴

The country was initially divided into eight territorial regions serviced by 70 customs houses and 253 customs posts. They faced the same problems as the Border Troops; namely, a lack of premises and facilities to undertake their work at a time when trade was expanding and people were becoming more mobile. The rapid expansion of the Customs Service and poor training and selection did not always attract the right people into the service. Between 1991 and 1995, 70 personnel were arrested for taking bribes and 1,000 were released from employment in the Customs Service.³⁵

A decree dated 12 October 1992 outlined plans to establish customs posts on the Russian and Belarusian borders, which, in turn, required an increase in customs staff. These customs posts along the main roads crossing into Moldova, Belarus and Russia are as much a demonstration of Ukrainian sovereignty as an attempt at controlling the borders. The number of Customs Officers rose dramatically between 1993 and 1994 to 13,000 (10,000 of whom were recruited in this period alone). Another 6,000 were added by the end of 1994 bringing the total number to nearly 20,000. Meanwhile, the total number of customs houses increased from 26 to 70 and checkpoints from 57 to 253.

A major problem with these newly recruited Customs Officers was their lack of legal and economic qualifications during a period of rapid flux in the country's legislation. This is meant to be resolved by the establishment of the Customs Academy in 1996 (the same year that a Diplomatic Academy

was also opened). The Kyiv-based Academy would, like its Border Troops equivalent in Khmel'nyts'kyi, provide basic training for Customs Officers which would also include Ukrainian and world history, economics and legal issues.

The 1991–97 period represented the first stage in the development of Ukraine's Customs Service. In April 1998 a presidential decree 'On the Ukrainian State Customs Service' outlined its structural transformation, systematic reform and proposals to increase its protection of domestic producers, control over imports-exports and defence of Ukraine's cultural heritage. Ukraine also joined the World Customs Organisation. The value of the Customs Service has outgrown its initial emphasis as a demonstration of sovereignty to also become a major source of budgetary income.

The Ukrainian National Guard

On 24 August 1991, the day it declared independence, the Ukrainian Parliament decreed its intention to establish a National Guard. Six days later a large proportion of the MVS Internal Troops based in Ukraine were nationalised to form the core of the future National Guard.

On 26 August recruitment had already begun in L'viv for a National Guard with contracts offered for a three year period.³⁶ All age groups were asked to volunteer on a competitive basis. For soldiers the age limit was 18–35, while for officers there were no age limits. The appeal of the L'viv headquarters of the National Guard to soldiers in Ukraine stated: 'Fellow patriots! Defence of independent Ukraine is now in our hands! Join the ranks of the republican National Guard of Ukraine.'³⁷

The headquarters and objectives for the National Guard in L'viv *oblast* were drawn up together with serving officers and men who would work out the documents and the stationing of the National Guard. They would ensure a patriotic upbringing, medical checks and establish their organisational structure.

The leadership of the MVS Internal Troops in Ukraine had pushed for over a year that they be transferred to the control of the Ukrainian MVS. The all-union MVS had called him a 'Ukrainian nationalist' for this; Deputy Commander of the Ukrainian MVS Volodymyr Korniyuchuk answered that, 'I am very disturbed by the anti-Ukrainian tendencies of certain circles in the centre, scaring us that Ukraine will not survive alone.' He believed that the MVS troops in Ukraine would be given over to the Ukrainian MVS and that he would continue to refuse any requests from Moscow for the dispatch of MVS units to regions outside Ukraine.

But, even after the Ukrainian nationalisation of MVS Internal Troops V. Hrekov, deputy head of Soviet MVS Internal Troops in Ukraine and

Moldova, stated that they were still abiding by the orders issued from the commander of Soviet MVD troops in Moscow, General-Lieutenant Yu. Shatalin; therefore, they were still controlled by the all-union MVD.³⁸ This was despite the 30 August 1991 decree of the presidium of the Ukrainian Parliament that all MVS and Border Troops based in Ukraine come under its command.

The USSR MVS replied to the Ukrainian nationalisation of its Internal Troops stationed in the republic by condemning the decision as 'unconstitutional'. USSR Defence Minister Air Marshal E.I. Shaposhnikov repeatedly called for a 'collective military concept', describing the placing of military units on Ukrainian territory under single republican control as 'unlawful'.³⁹ The MVS troops, on the other hand, were enthusiastic about staying in Ukraine, tired of being sent to distant regions of the USSR to intercede in ethnic disputes: 'We now know what we will defend ... Now we will defend the sovereignty of the republic', one MVS soldier stated. The regiment's commander in Kyiv, Russian-born Colonel Oleksandr Bibkov, stated that his troops would no longer obey Moscow.⁴⁰

Not all of the officers and political officers of the former MVD troops in Ukraine agreed with their transformation into a National Guard. Oleksandr Lobachuk, a Major in the MVS forces in Western Ukraine, has described how they prevented the Ukrainian Parliament decree of 29 November 1991 from being implemented and circulated within their units. They had tried to entice MVS soldiers to go and serve in the Soviet armed forces instead. The main problem, Major Lobachuk believed, was that a deliberate policy of ethnic mixing was undertaken in order that Ukrainians and Russians be sent to Nagorno-Karabakh while Central Asians were sent to Western Ukraine. When these Central Asians were asked if they would shoot at Ukrainians they said 'Yes'.⁴¹ Friction within the armed forces was not solely between ethnic groups though.

Andriy Haysynskyj, a commander in the National Guard, outlined that in L'viv the Union of Ukrainian Officers and the Citizens Committee for the Revival of the Ukrainian National Army were the basis for the launch of a National Guard. Many enterprises had given financial donations, for example an enterprise in Rivne had provided 100,000 roubles 'and promised to support them in the future'. New sponsors would appear, they believed.⁴²

The L'viv *oblast* council had appealed for extra accommodation for officers and to open an officer's club in the city. The National Guard was described as a, 'territorial army which is influenced by historical experience'. Recruits would serve in their region, thereby providing a strong psychological sense of supporting their geographic area. They would be highly professional with modern technology. The projected number

would be between 30,000 and 50,000 on a contract basis, including women. 'Elite sub-units' would be stationed in all *oblast* centres, with 16 military bases already created in *oblast* centres. The National Guard would possess its own firearms, armoured carriers, tanks, helicopters and aircraft.

A statement released on 12 October 1991 in Odesa stated that a Black Sea 'Haydamakskyj Sotni' (Cossack Platoon) was formed and would support the establishment of Ukrainian independence and a National Guard. The unit planned to join the Ukrainian National Guard as a separate military branch. It enlisted anybody over 16, regardless of ethnic, party or religious allegiances.⁴³ Meanwhile, in Kirovohrad pickets at the *oblast* council building demanded that 15 per cent of conscripts remain in the city to serve in the National Guard.⁴⁴

The National Guard was officially established on 4 November 1991 by the Ukrainian Parliament, and the commander was named as Colonel Volodymyr Kukharets,⁴⁵ formerly the commander of a Dnipropetrovsk MVS Internal Troops convoy brigade.⁴⁶ The first reading gave a vote of only 76 votes in support of the National Guard being subordinated to the president. In the second reading 241 votes gave a majority in favour of the National Guard being controlled by the Ukrainian Parliament. This conflict over the dual subordination of the National Guard to the executive/parliament simmered throughout the 1990s (see later). Moscow ended the financing of MVS troops in Ukraine in retaliation for the official establishment of the Ukrainian National Guard.⁴⁷

According to the commander of the National Guard, Kukharets, the first stage would see the guard with 30,000 troops rising to eventually 50,000. But, 'the requirements for such a quantity of guards may not arise – everything will depend upon the situation in Ukraine and in the country as a whole'.⁴⁸ The guard will not have 'policing functions' (which would make it unpopular), but it would be an elite force, 'closer to airborne troops'.⁴⁹ The first National Guard units had 6,000 recruits immediately drawn from MVS internal troops stationed in Ukraine.

By April 1992 the National Guard was planned to have 30,000 members using requisitioned MVS equipment. The National Guard would wear a white puma badge on a blue and yellow background (this eventually became the symbol of the Kyiv National Guard Division's spetsnaz unit). They would have priority in entering higher military schools and would protect embassies, government buildings and the president.⁵⁰ Recruits had to possess an educational level above high school, be at least 165 centimetres high and in good health.⁵¹

The law on the National Guard described them as a 'state military organ' based on former interior troops geared to the defence of Ukrainian sovereignty, territorial integrity, the constitution and freedom from

'criminal and anti-constitutional actions'. The National Guard would be based upon civil laws and be subordinate to the president, and could not be used in other areas not covered by the law. No political parties would be allowed to operate within the National Guard. As the commander of the National Guard, Major General Kukharets, stated, 'politics is not for servicemen'.⁵² The language used within its ranks would be Ukrainian.

The seven areas that came within the National Guard's responsibilities were:

1. emergencies and catastrophes;
2. defence of republican territorial integrity;
3. defence of state objectives;
4. assist border troops;
5. defence of consulates and embassies;
6. ceremonies, meetings with visiting VIPs, state celebrations;
7. military activity in the case of foreign aggression and defence of Ukrainian security;

Although much of how the National Guard was described was meant to distance its operating style from that of the Soviet security forces, the language used to define its aims showed how influenced it still was by the Soviet legacy and to what degree these overlapped with other security forces. The 'Rights and Responsibilities' of the National Guard included the protection of Ukraine's sovereignty (usually the prerogative of the armed forces), territorial integrity (within the remit of Border Troops) and the constitutional order (usually left to the Security Service). It would repel external and internal 'enemy attacks' as well as, 'Participate in the liquidation of subversive-reconnaissance and terrorist groups and illegally formed armed military units'. This language harked back to the 1940s when the NKVD had battled the nationalist Ukrainian insurgent army (UPA) in Western Ukraine. Yet, the National Guard were never used to suppress extreme right paramilitary groups or Russian Cossacks in the Crimea.

The National Guard also backed up the Border Troops and the Directorate of State Security (see earlier) in defending top ranking leaders (thus fulfilling the role of a presidential guard). They acted as a ceremonial unit on special occasions and protected foreign diplomatic buildings. The National Guard also backed the MVS in policing operations (although this was taken away from them in 1995).

In December 1991 the National Guard turned out the first officers for embassy and consulate guard duty.⁵³ Two months later the National Guard's

duties were extended to include the maintenance of public order in towns, sports events and public concerts.⁵⁴ During the December 1991 referendum on independence over 90 per cent of MVS troops in Ukraine voted for independence and 57 per cent for Kravchuk to be president, according to data released by the USSR MVS Internal Troops headquarters. In L'viv *oblast* the Rukh leader and then Chairman of L'viv *oblast* council V'iacheslav Chornovil was more popular among MVS troops.⁵⁵ On 27 December 1991 the first units of the National Guard under Colonel Hennadiy Strelnykov had sworn an oath to Ukraine and their pay was set at 350 roubles per month (the republican average wage) from 1 January 1992.⁵⁶

On 5 January 1992 all National Guards units in Ukraine took the new oath of loyalty to Ukraine.⁵⁷ In L'viv *oblast* the ceremony was attended by leaders of the regional council, the hierarchies of the Greek Catholic and Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, to the sound of Ukrainian military music.⁵⁸ Only 1,080 were reported to have refused, all from Uzbekistan, who were allowed to return to their republic.⁵⁹ Those who had taken the oath altered the letters 'VV' (internal troops) to 'NG' (National Guard) on their epaulettes.⁶⁰ Each unit would have its own colours, reflecting, 'the national character and the traditions of the concrete region where the unit is stationed'.⁶¹

In May 1992 the National Guard took in its first conscripts. The greatest number were recruited, with the help of the local authorities, in Dnipropetrovs'k, Donetsk, Odesa, L'viv, Kyiv, Poltava and Ternopil *oblasts*. The lowest number of recruits came from Sumy, Cherkasy, Kirovohrad *oblasts* and, of course, the Crimea.⁶² The National Guard was only stationed permanently in the Crimea, with the consent of the autonomous republic's leaders, from early 1993. The occupation of the Crimean parliament and mass demonstrations by Crimean Tatars in November 1992 ended the hostility of the Crimean leadership towards the stationing of the National Guard on their territory.

In early November 1992 the National Guard undertook its first training lessons to check its combat readiness to perform tasks in accordance with the law on National Guard. In particular, this included training in winter conditions.⁶³ By the end of 1992 the National Guard had performed 2,061 tasks, 135 of them away from their places of permanent stationing.⁶⁴ After the 17 March presidential decree 3,000 National Guard were dispatched to help seal the Moldovan-Ukrainian border. This halted the flow of Russian Cossack mercenaries to the separatist Trans-Dniester Republic in Moldova and confiscated a large number of arms along a '50-kilometer zone of strict regime'.⁶⁵ Highly trained officers who wanted to return from 'hot spots' in the former USSR, such as Georgia and Tajikistan, were welcomed within the ranks of the National Guard.⁶⁶

Re-organisation

The National Guard was composed of 26,600 personnel in 7 divisions. Created after the failed Moscow putsch in August 1991 it was always, 'closely tied to the declaration of independence of Ukraine'.⁶⁷ By the mid-1990s it included three components:

- units formerly part of the Soviet Internal Troops;
- units that had a purely militia function transferred from the militia;
- newly created units, often made up of security force personnel who had returned from other regions of the former USSR.

Although plans had originally been laid to organise the National Guard in each *oblast* centre, by the late 1990s only 14 (out of 25) actually had them. Insufficient numbers prevented them from being based in the remainder. The largest workloads were faced by the Donets'k and Crimean units of the National Guard. National Guard units were to be withdrawn from L'viv in 1999 and their personnel distributed to what was perceived to be the two potentially most unstable regions – Crimea and Donets'k.

In June 1992 the National Guard received the former Suvorov/Kutuzova 48th Krivoi Rih KGB Division, which had been re-located back to Ukraine from Eastern Germany. The division was a close relative of the Dzhherzhinsky KGB Division in Moscow (now the Presidential separate special purpose division ODon). The 48th Division was based at Chuhuiiv, near Kharkiv on the sensitive Russian border and represented the most formidable unit of the National Guard.

By late 1992, 5 divisions had been created – Kyiv, Eastern, Southern, Northern, Western plus a Kharkiv Academy of the National Guard. Each division had its own emblem based on local and national traditions. A division was planned to have up to 10,000 personnel, with regiments and battalions of 2,593 and 452 personnel respectively. After the transfer of police units back to the MVS Internal Troops following a presidential decree on 20 January 1995 the total number of National Guard declined from their peak of over 50,000 (1991–95) to less than 30,000. These police units transferred back to the MVS became the basis for the creation of 'Special Motorised Militia Units' (see earlier).⁶⁸

National Guard Divisions

1. *Kyiv Division:*

- Kyiv, Vynnytsia, Cherkasy regiments,
- Zhitomir, Khmel'nyts'kyi, Chernihiv battalions,
- 'White Panther' spetsnaz unit,

2. *Eastern Division:*

- Kharkiv, Chuhuiiv, Luhans'k regiments,
- Poltava, Sumy, Shostkynsky battalions,

3. *Southern Division:*

- Zaporizhzhia regiment,
- Mykolaiv, Kherson, Kirovohrad, Odesa battalions,
- Simferopol brigade (Simferopol regiment, Sevastopol battalion, Kerch, Dzhankoy and Yevpatoria companies, 'Cobra' spetsnaz),⁶⁹

4. *Northern Division:*

- Donetsk, Dnipropetrovs'k, Krivoi Rih regiments,
- Mariupol, Pavlohrad battalions,

5. *Western Division:*

- L'viv, Uzhorod regiments,
- Chernivtsi, Luts'k, Rivne, Ternopil, Drohobys'kyi battalions,
- 'Scorpion' spetsnaz unit (L'viv),

The National Guard was always defined as an 'elite structure', but pay scales never differed from those in the armed forces. Morale was higher because of what was defined as its 'combative spirit' and 'high discipline'.⁷⁰ Former Commander of the National Guard General-Lieutenant Oleksandr Kuz'muk describes them as follows:

The National Guard of Ukraine is the elite. This is a highly organised, professionally prepared, united in ideals military structure which is always ready for self sacrifice in the name of Ukrainian independence and its territorial integrity, called upon in difficult times to accomplish its duties of defending the lives and the people's pride of Ukrainian citizens.⁷¹

Controversy over the duties of the National Guard continued to be debated throughout its existence. According to its then Commander-in-Chief General-Lieutenant Kuz'muk, the National Guard defended the 'constitutional order of the state' and it 'played a stabilising role'.⁷² 'The National Guard plays a peacekeeping and stabilising role in our state.'⁷³ Many of the threats it was meant to deal with were defined in archaic Soviet language as 'diversionary groups', 'terrorists' or 'bandit formations'. Such vague formulations can be designated against any number of threats – separatist groups, ethnic minorities (such as Chechens in Russia) or organised crime. The 'Cobra' spetsnaz unit, for example, supported the State Automobile Inspectorate (DAI) in apprehending stolen cars in the Crimea.⁷⁴

This vague formulation referred as much to domestic as to foreign threats.⁷⁵ The National Guard's tragedy was that it was called upon to back the Border Troops and armed forces against *external* enemies as well as back Internal Troops against *internal* ones. The Border Troops, armed forces or Internal Troops are called upon to deal with only one set of threats (external *or* internal) whereas the National Guard was called upon to deal with both.

Joint exercises with the US National Guard in the 'spirit of Partnership for Peace' operate under simulated states of emergency, natural disasters and exercises in eliminating armed extremist groups. In the first quarter of 1999 a typical mix of National Guard activities included 1,323 cases of dealing with demonstrations and meetings, 144 joint operations with the MVS, ensuring the peacefulness of 273 mass actions (e.g. concerts and sports occasions), and 20 extraordinary situations (e.g. natural catastrophes).⁷⁶

The Crimean National Guard

In the Crimea the National Guard backed Border Troops, 'defended constitutional order' and, if required, helped install a 'state of emergency regime'. These threats could conceivably come from outside the Crimea (e.g. Russian or Muslim volunteers rushing to defend their brethren in a conflict), which the Border Troops would be the first units to block. But, the real threat in the Crimea, as it was recognised by the National Guard, was domestic from separatism, the Black Sea Fleet or Tatar fundamentalism. Hence they were unpopular with pro-Russian separatists on the peninsula who accused them 'of all sorts of sins'.⁷⁷

In May 1996 a brigade of Crimean marines and a motor rifle battalion were transferred from the armed forces to the National Guard on the peninsula, giving them their own marines. During the same period the National Guard units in the Crimea (troops, marines, spetsnaz) were reorganised into a separate division, making this the seventh of the National Guards. These elements of the Crimean (seventh) National Guards Division were located throughout the peninsula, particularly in Sevastopol, Simferopol, Feodosiya and Kerch on the border with Russia. Nearly all of them were designated 'spetsnaz' (two mountain units, Cobra and Levanda, a spetsnaz battalion in Simferopol), signifying the degree to which the region requires highly specialised security forces.

The Crimean Division was one of the best within the National Guard or armed forces, incorporating spetsnaz, mountain spetsnaz, marines and air mobile units.⁷⁸ Clearly, the potential threat from ethnic instability, the Russian Black Sea Fleet and foreign territorial claims in the Crimea influenced the establishment of the highly trained and efficient elite Crimean National Guard.

Civilian Control of the National Guard

In early 1995 four deputy commanders of the National Guard wrote a letter to the president where they proposed that as part of the process of reforming the National Guard it be placed under his direct control.⁷⁹ On 6 October 1995 a presidential decree placed the National Guard directly under the control of the commander-in-chief, President Leonid Kuchma.⁸⁰ This was the only security force that had always been under dual parliamentary-presidential control, a situation that had arisen because the National Guard had been created as the first security force loyal to independent Ukraine prior to the establishment of a presidency on 1 December 1991. When established therefore it had been placed under the control of then Parliamentary Chairman, Leonid Kravchuk.

The executive also accused parliament of utilising the National Guard for functions for which it was unsuitable (e.g. the protection of personal residences, motor vehicle depots or stores). An intelligence service was established within the National Guard, on the order of parliament, 'charged with tasks which not only contradicted the law, but were also categorically prohibited'.⁸¹ The executive accused parliament of using the National Guard's embryonic intelligence service to gather intelligence on the presidential administration.

The attempt to change this anomaly and make the National Guard subordinate to only the president and Commander-in-Chief, as with all other security forces, was nevertheless blocked by the parliamentary left. The left feared that the executive would turn the National Guard into a de facto presidential guard.

The unresolved nature of this dual power continued to remain throughout the 1990s. National Guard Commander General Oleksandr Chapovs'kyi said that his security force was ready to obey any order issued by the president or parliament. The problem was if they issued contradictory orders, such as in the parliamentary revolt in Moscow in September–October 1993. The commander believed that in such a situation it would act in accordance with the constitution and laws.⁸² Clearly, such an answer did not deal with the problem of vaguely defined constitutional articles or laws.

Combat Readiness

The National Guard was created on the basis of the special purpose operational units of Soviet internal troops and were fully manned with the best pick of conscripts. They possessed excellent armoured vehicles, artillery and helicopters with efficient command, control and communications. 'They spare neither time, nor effort on training in hand to hand combat, shooting, and special skills.' Their seven divisions 'are,

perhaps, stronger than the entire Ukrainian army'.⁸³ This though was relative, meaning that it was less worse off than other branches of the security forces. In 1998 the government allocated only 65 million *hryvni* out of a total of 135 million that was required. Of the 65 million in the budget only 40.6 million had been provided.⁸⁴ Although the National Guard were an 'elite' unit they often suffered more than the armed forces from a lack of officer housing because the army had construction battalions. As late as 1999 two thirds of National Guard officers had no housing.⁸⁵

Special Forces

The National Guard had three main special units (spetsnaz) throughout Ukraine: 'Scorpion' (L'viv), 'White Panther' (Kyiv)⁸⁶ and 'Cobra' (Crimea). In the Crimea the National Guard created Ukraine's first mountain spetsnaz unit ('Cobra') in May 1996. Cobra units were located throughout the Crimea, including in Sevastopol.

On 12 June 1992 a helicopter regiment was transferred to the National Guard. The air mobile units of the National Guard were located in the central Ukrainian city of Oleksandria, Kirovohrad *oblast*, consisting of 45 Mi-6, Mi-8 and Mi-24 helicopters. Based here the units were on 24 hour readiness to fly to any region of Ukraine with parachute teams of National Guardsmen.⁸⁷

National Guard Dissolved

Budgetary constraints and pressure from international financial institutions to reduce the state bureaucracy led to three presidential decrees in December 1999 that outlined plans for administrative reform. This included the liquidation of the National Guard with 15,000 of its personnel transferred to the MVS Internal Troops and another 6,000 to the armed forces (particularly those units with heavy equipment, such as the former KGB tank division in Chuhuiiv). The transfer of the bulk of the National Guard to the Internal Troops marks the second time this had occurred because motorised police units had been transferred back in 1995 (see earlier). The MVS and the Ministry of Defence had competed for many years as to who would take over the National Guard, both claiming that it would reduce costs. The armed forces had always argued that in the USA the National Guard come under the Department of Defence as a military reserve.

Conclusion

The Ukrainian state inherited a variety of security units from the former USSR. The Border Troops were expanded to cover new border regions of

Ukraine not previously covered (Ukraine only inherited Border Troops and infrastructure on the former Soviet external frontier). The Berkut were restructured from the OMON/ZMOP riot police inherited from the former USSR. The Directorate of State Defence of Ukraine (DOU) was built upon the former KGB directorate devoted to the same task (protection of high ranking officials). It only existed as an autonomous unit directly under the presidency between 1992 and 1996, after which it was transferred back to the Security Service.

The State Protection Service, together with its spetsnaz unit Tytan, and Sokil were established as new branches of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVS). The Internal Troops of the MVS also established three new spetsnaz units (Bars, Hopard and Jaguar) and expanded its SMChM units. Meanwhile, personnel involved in the transportation of prisoners and the guarding of prisons were removed to other areas of the MVS, with a view to transferring them to the Ministry of Justice in the near future.

Ukraine's Border Troops have come a long way since their creation in November 1991 on the basis of the Soviet Western Border District of the KGB. From an initial number of only 17,000 they have expanded nearly threefold in number as they expanded their coverage of Ukraine's frontiers to those which previously were only internal, administrative lines within the USSR. Their expansion has been accompanied by a firm legislative base and participation within the overall formulation of governmental and security policies in the Cabinet of Ministers and National Security and Defence Council. This has also been accompanied by the sevenfold growth of the Customs Service to 20,000 personnel. Both the Border Troops and the Customs Service play an important role in European security by stemming the flow of illegal migrants, weapons and narcotics flowing from east to west across Ukrainian territory.

The National Guard, which existed from August 1991 to December 1999, obtained the best equipment, healthiest and best qualified recruits. Their role as 'the state's armed institution', in former Commander Kukharets words,⁸⁸ to defend Ukrainian territorial integrity was important to a state whose borders were questioned by its neighbours until as late as early 1999.⁸⁹ In former Commander Kukharet's words, 'The National Guard of Ukraine is a stabilising factor in the state, a guarantee of the democratic changes within it.'⁹⁰ The transfer of the National Guard to the armed forces and MVS internal troops in December 1999 came after Ukraine's borders had been recognised by its neighbours (the last to do this was the upper house of the Russian parliament in February 1999).

Studies of civil-military relations in Ukraine and other post-Soviet states should not ignore the non-military security forces. In many cases (e.g. Ukraine and Russia) they are now larger than the armed forces, have fewer

problems with funding and their prioritisation reflects the threat perceptions of the ruling elites.

NOTES

1. On the late Soviet era see T. Kuzio, 'Civil-Military Relations in Ukraine, 1989–1991', *Armed Forces and Society* 22/1 (Autumn 1995) pp.25–49. A poor attempt at developing this field is Richard B. Spence who uses primarily secondary sources in his often factually wrong 'Democratization, Militarism and Paramilitarism in Post-Soviet Ukraine' in Constantine P. Danopoulos and Daniel Zirker (eds.) *The Military and Society in the Former Eastern Bloc* (Boulder, CO: Westview 1999) pp.137–56. The role of civic groups is covered by T. Kuzio, 'Ukrainian Paramilitaries', *Jane's Intelligence Review* 4/12 (Dec. 1992) pp.540–1, 'Paramilitary Groups in Ukraine', *ibid.* 6/3 (March 1994) pp.123–5 and 'Ukraine's 'Young Turks' – the Union of Ukrainian Officers', *ibid.* 5/1 (Jan. 1993) pp.23–6.
2. On the short lived experimentation with a civilian defence minister see Pavel Baev and Tor Bukkvol, 'Ukraine's Army under Civilian Rule', *Jane's Intelligence Review* 8/1 (1996) pp.6–8. On the reform of the armed forces during a period of socio-economic crisis see T. Kuzio, 'Ukrainian Armed Forces in Crisis', *ibid.* 7/7 (July 1995) pp.305–6 and 'Ukrainian Civil-Military Relations and the Military Impact of the Ukrainian Economic Crisis' in Bruce Parrott (ed.) *State Building and Military Power in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe 1995) pp.157–92 and 'Crisis and reform in Ukraine – Parts 1 and 2', *Jane's Intelligence Review* 8/10–11 (Oct.–Nov. 1996) pp.448–50 and 496–8.
3. On the rights and duties of the Tax Police see *Uriadovyi Kurier*, 18 Oct. 1997.
4. Anatoliy S. Grytsenko, *Civil-Military Relations in Ukraine: A System Emerging From Chaos, Harmonie Paper 1* (Groningen: Centre for European Security Studies, Dec. 1997) p.9.
5. See the interview with the then Commander of the Internal troops, Major General Volodymyr Povazhniuk, *Imenem Zakonu*, 21 March 1997.
6. On the Internal Troops see *Uriadovyi Kurier*, 25 March 1995, *Narodna Armiya*, 24 March 1995, *Den*, 4 March 1997, *Narodna Armiya*, 26 March 1997, *Viysko Ukrainy*, Nos.3–4, 1997, *Militsia Ukrainy*, No.6, 1998, *Uriadovyi Kurier*, 31 March and 18 June 1998, *Narodna Armiya*, 16 June 1998, *Militsia Ukrainy*, Nos.3–4, 1999, *Narodna Armiya*, 16 Oct. 1999.
7. *Uriadovyi Kurier*, 28 Sept. 1996.
8. *Den*, 8 April 1997, *Narodna Armiya*, 10 April 1998 and *Holos Ukrainy*, 3 Feb. 1999.
9. *Uriadovyi Kurier*, 31 Dec. 1996 and *Narodna Armiya*, 26 March and 8 April 1998.
10. *Holos Ukrainy*, 17 Nov. 1992, *Vechirnyi Kyiv*, 18 May 1993, *Kyivski Vidomosti*, 17 Feb. 1994, *Vechirnyi Kyiv*, 30 June 1994, *Kyivski Vidomosti*, 20 Dec. 1995, *Uriadovyi Kurier*, 2 March 1996, *Uriadovyi Kurier*, 5 June 1997.
11. *Militsia Ukrainy*, Nos.1–2, 1999.
12. *Narodna Armiya*, 25 Oct. 1995, *Molod' Ukrainy*, 17 Nov. 1995, *Vechirnyi Kyiv*, 6 Feb. 1996, *Uriadovyi Kurier*, 13 Feb. and 24 June 1997, *Narodna Armiya*, 5 June 1997.
13. *Militsia Ukrainy*, Nos.3–4, 1999.
14. There are no studies of the Ukrainian Security Service. For an early attempt see T. Kuzio, 'The Security Service of Ukraine – A Transformed Ukrainian KGB?' *Jane's Intelligence Review* 5/3 (March 1993) pp.115–117.
15. See the interview with the then head of the DOU, Major General Yuriy Taberko, *Ukraina Moloda*, 29 Jan. 1998.
16. *Holos Ukrainy*, 19 Dec. 1996.
17. *Imenem Zakonu*, 16 July 1999.
18. *Militsia Ukrainy*, Nos.7–8, 1999.
19. See Anatoliy Samarchenko, 'Na Kordoni Maye Buty Iak Na Kordoni', *Polityka 1 Chas* 3, 1996, pp.31–6. See also chapter 5 in T. Kuzio, *Ukraine. State and Nation Building* (London: Routledge 1998) pp.100–18.
20. *Ostankino Radio Mayak*, 23 Dec. 1994 and *UNIAN*, 10 June 1996.

21. *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy*, 18 Aug. 1992.
22. *Prykordonyk Ukrainy*, 31 Jan. 1998.
23. *Holos Ukrainy*, 5 Dec. 1992.
24. *Demokratychna Ukraina*, 22 Dec. 1992.
25. *Demokratychna Ukraina*, 19 April 1994.
26. Vadym Maksymenko, 'Instytut Prykordonnykh Viys'k – Kuznia Kadriv Kordonu', *Viys'ko Ukrainy*, No.8 (June 1993), pp.84–91.
27. *UNIAR*, 24 Aug. 1993.
28. *UNIAN*, 5 Aug. 1995 and *Den'*, 28 Aug. 1997.
29. *Reuters*, 18 June 1996.
30. *UNIAN*, 4 March 1995.
31. *Holos Ukrainy*, 2 Nov. 1996.
32. *Viysko Ukrainy*, No.4, 1993, pp.55–6, *Uriadovyi Kurier*, 13 May 1993
33. *Narodna Armiya*, 13 Dec. 1995 and *Aktsent*, 10 Jan. 1996.
34. *Uriadovyi Kurier*, 25 April 1998.
35. *Holos Ukrainy*, 14 March 1995.
36. *Za vilnu Ukrainu*, 27 Aug. and *Central Television*, 28 Aug. 1991.
37. *Za vilnu Ukrainu*, 3 Sept. 1991.
38. *Kievskyy Visnyk*, 20 Sept. 1991.
39. *Moscow News*, 24 Nov. 1991.
40. *The Guardian Weekly*, 24 Nov. 1991.
41. *Za vilnu Ukrainu*, 29 Nov. 1991.
42. *Za vilnu Ukrainu*, 20 Sept. 1991.
43. *Central Television*, 13 Nov. 1991.
44. *Radio Kyiv*, 6 Oct. 1991.
45. *Izvestia*, 24 Oct. 1991.
46. *Koza*, 22 Nov. 1991. See also the interview with Kukharets in *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 26 Nov. 1991.
47. *Molod' Ukrainy*, 1 Nov. 1991.
48. *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 28 Nov. 1991.
49. *Radio Kyiv*, 19 Nov. 1991.
50. See also *The Financial Times*, 4 Nov. and *The Independent*, 5 Nov. 1991.
51. *Za vilnu Ukrainu*, 12 Dec. 1991.
52. *Kievskyy Visnyk*, 6 Nov. 1992.
53. *Sil'ski Visti*, 5 Dec. 1992.
54. *Vechirnyy Kyiv*, 2 Feb. 1993.
55. *Postfactum*, 1 Dec. 1991.
56. *Kievska Pravda*, 1 Jan. 1992.
57. *Molod' Ukrainy*, 5 Jan. 1992.
58. *Za vilnu Ukrainu*, 24 Dec. 1991.
59. *Ukrains'ki Novyny*, No.26, 1992.
60. *Russian Television*, 7 Jan. 1992.
61. *Russia's Radio*, 28 Dec. 1991.
62. *Hart*, 13 June 1992.
63. *Narodnaya Armiya*, 10 Nov. 1992.
64. *Kievskyy Visnyk*, 6 Nov. 1992.
65. *Uriadovyy Kurier*, Nos.56–57, 27 Nov. 1992.
66. *Ukrainian Television*, 11 Dec. 1992.
67. *Den'*, 17 Dec. 1999.
68. *Chas*, 16 Aug. 1996.
69. This was later transformed into the Crimean Division.
70. *Narodna Armiya*, 21 Oct. 1994.
71. *Ibid*. 6 Jan. 1996.
72. *Ibid* 4 Nov. 1995.
73. *Ibid* 4 Nov. 1999.
74. *Ukraina moloda*, 13 Feb. 1998.

75. Then Commander of the National Guard Ihor Bal'kiv supported legislation clearly stating under what conditions they could be utilised (*Den'*, 17 May 1997).
76. *Narodna Armiya*, 9 April 1999.
77. *Narodna Armiya*, 28 March 1995.
78. *Chas*, 16 Aug. 1996.
79. *Kievski Vidomosti*, 22 March 1995.
80. *Holos Ukraïny*, 11 Oct. 1995.
81. *Kievskiy Vedomosti*, 17 Oct. 1995.
82. *Den'*, 18 Feb. 1998.
83. *Obschchaya Gazeta*, 9 March 1995.
84. *Intelnews*, 5 Nov. 1998.
85. *Narodna Armiya*, 4 March 1999.
86. *Militisia Ukraïny*, No.3, 1998.
87. *Shtyakh Peremohy*, 9 Oct. 1997.
88. *Vijsko Ukrainy*, No.1, 1992.
89. It was not until Feb. 1999 that the upper house of the Russian parliament (Federation Council) ratified the May 1997 Ukrainian-Russian treaty.
90. *Vijsko Ukrainy*, No.1, 1992.