



NEW UKRAINIAN EMBASSY IN OTTAWA

The government of Ukraine has purchased the former New Democratic Party national headquarters on Somerset Street West in Ottawa for \$1.8 million.

Ukraine was looking for more space to match the country's growing relationship with Canada. Ukraine now has eight diplomats in Ottawa, double the number of two years ago. Ukraine still owns a Metcalfe Street building -- its first mission -- and will use it as a "consulate" if it cannot be sold. Ukraine also owns a large Island Park Drive residence bought for its Canadian envoy two years ago by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress.



Newly-purchased Ukrainian Embassy in Ottawa.

WHAT ABOUT FORMER SOVIET PROPERTIES

While the new premises are reason for both the Embassy staff and the local Ukrainian community to celebrate, it still leaves unanswered the irritating question of whatever happened to all the properties and other assets owned by the Former Soviet Union. This topic was still on the agenda recently when the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Kozyrev met with Ukrainian officials, and is expected to be raised again when Russian President Yeltsin makes his proposed visit to Ukraine in the coming months. Ukraine is still demanding its rightful 16 per cent share of the USSR's assets, a figure proportional to Ukraine's economic status in the former USSR.

Taking the opportunity to bring up another touchy topic, the Ukrainian Ambassador to Canada, Victor Batyuk recently explained that "...this 16 percent should also apply to the USSR's total marine fleet. In fact, the Black Sea Fleet makes up only 10-12 per cent of the FSU's total marine strength, ranking far behind the Mediterranean, Baltic, and Northern fleets. So Ukraine should not only legally keep the entire Black Sea Fleet, but even could lay claim to part of the other fleets."

Some of the other smaller republics have also echoed this sentiment, demanding their fair share of all the properties and assets of the FSU. But Russia has taken another approach, deciding instead to keep all assets in exchange for assuming the total debt of

the FSU.

"They didn't shortchange themselves," continued Mr. Batyuk.

In another scenario, Russia has proposed sharing buildings in some 20 or 30 cities, in a rental or joint-usage arrangement. While Ottawa was not one of the cities on that list, would the Ambassador personally agree to such an arrangement? "This was the arrangement in New York when I was posted in the United Nations, and I would never want to repeat that experience!" he stated.

Meanwhile, as for the question of property, possession does seem to be nine tenths of the law... apparently for Russia only.



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