KIEV (URSS) - La majorité des électeurs ukrainiens ont voté pour l’indépendance et apparemment élu, au 1er tour, M. Leonid Kravtchouk à la tête de la seconde république par l’importance économique et la population de l’ex-URSS, après la Russie, selon les premiers résultats officiels. L’Ukraine ne signera pas le traité de l’Union, a aussitôt affirmé M. Leonid Kravtchouk, selon l’agence indépendante NEGA.

LONDRES - Le président russe Boris Eltsine a reconnu l’indépendance de l’Ukraine, a annoncé la télévision russe, captée lundi soir à Londres par les services de la BBC.

BEYROUTH - Après 1 907 jours de captivité, l’otage américain Joseph Cicippio, 61 ans, a été libéré par ses ravisseurs.

JERUSALEM - Le Premier ministre espagnol Felipe Gonzalez s’est entretenu avec les responsables israéliens de l’évolution du processus de paix au Proche-Orient et des moyens de renforcer les relations entre l’État hébreu et la Communauté européenne.

LOME - Le chef de l’État togolais, le général Gnassingbé Eyadéma, a incité lundi soir le Premier ministre de transition Joseph Kokou Koffigoh, à nouveau assiégé depuis le matin par l’armée, à "engager le dialogue" avec les militaires sur les "revendications précises" que ceux-ci ont formulées. Auparavant, M. Kokou Koffigoh, après avoir renouvelé son "appel à l’aide militaire de la France" et affirmé qu’il "tiendrait bon", avait rendu publique une série de propositions en vue de "sauver le pays de la guerre civile" et de retrouver le "chemin de la démocratie".

PATTAYA (Thaïlande) - Les Khmers Rouges ont réclamé l’envoi immédiat d’une force de protection de l’ONU à Phnom Penh et la restitution d’un de leurs cadres de haut niveau qu’ils ont décrits comme "un otage" du gouvernement cambodgien comme conditions de leur retour dans la capitale cambodgienne.

NAIROBI - Les dirigeants de l’Union nationale africaine du Kénya (KANU, parti unique) se sont prononcés en faveur du multipartisme lors d’une réunion qui fait suite à la suspension de l’aide occidentale.

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OCDE

Afp: Environnement et développement au centre d’une réunion

PARIS - "Les ministres des pays industrialisés occidentaux et du Japon ont entamé lundi à Paris 2 jours de débats sur les moyens de mener de front développement économique et protection de l’environnement afin de réussir un ‘développement mondial durable’. ‘Si nous ne parvenons pas à créer les conditions d’un développement durable, nous devrons payer un prix élevé qui se traduira par des tensions sociales, des pressions en ce qui concerne l’immigration et une dégradation de l’environnement’, a déclaré aux ministres Jean-Claude Paye, Secrétaire Général de l’OCDE. Au cours de cette session, la 1ère réunissant les ministres de l’environnement et du Développement des 24 pays membres de l’OCDE, les participants ont cherché à définir les termes d’une ‘collaboration globale’ pour relever ce défi, ont indiqué des responsables. Ces discussions visent à préparer la Conférence des Nations unies sur l’Environnement et le Développement (UNCED) qui s’ouvrira le 1er juin à Rio de Janeiro... Pour financer un développement durable, les pays nordiques, l’Australie et les pays de la CEE se sont prononcés en faveur d’une augmentation de l’aide à la protection de l’environnement tandis que les Etats-Unis s’y opposaient, ont indiqué des responsables."
UKRAINE TO LEAVE UNION

FINANCIAL TIMES: Ukraine votes for full independence by 9 to 1

KIEV/MOSCOW - "Ukraine yesterday delivered what could be a death blow to the Soviet Union when it announced an overwhelming vote for full independence. Preliminary returns indicated that 90.85% of the republic’s population said ‘yes’ to independence. More than 60% supported Mr Leonid Kravchuk, the former communist chairman of the Ukrainian parliament, to become the nation's first president. ... Ukraine would be one of the largest independent states in Europe with a population of almost 52m and an area of 603,700 sq km, dwarfing even the united Germany which lies on its western border. The result coincided with a Moscow warning that armed conflict could erupt if the republic broke away from the Soviet Union. Mr Ivan Silayev, chairman of the Inter-republican Economic Committee - in effect Soviet prime minister - told the French daily FIGARO that Russo-Ukrainian conflict could erupt over the Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula which has a majority Russian population. 'The Ukraine will suffer heavy losses if it decided to isolate itself from other republics’, Mr Silayev warned."

HERALD TRIBUNE: Poland and Canada recognize Ukraine

WASHINGTON - "... Poland became the first nation to recognize Ukrainian independence. The announcement was made by the official Polish press agency, PAP. In Ottawa, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney said Canada would recognize the Ukraine and would shortly open negotiations on establishing diplomatic relations. In Washington, the White House press secretary, Marlin Fitzwater, said, ‘We want to be supportive of the positive change’... Mr Fitzwater said the United States remained concerned about many issues, including the fate of nuclear weapons now in the Ukraine. But he added, ‘We obviously are moving toward full diplomatic recognition’.

REUTER: Gorbachev acknowledges coup risk as Ukraine dashes union hopes

MOSCOW - "President Mikhail Gorbachev, his position under siege as the Ukraine marched towards full independence, was quoted on Tuesday as saying Communists or the military could be plotting a new coup in the Soviet Union... 'There are some who expect a new coup. Perhaps they are even organising one. Someone from the military industrial complex, someone from the (Communist) party structures’, he told the weekly LITERATURNAYA GAZETA in an interview. 'So the conclusion is: just press ahead, because we have no way back. We must push reforms forward, and push them systematically'."

YUGOSLAVIA

FINANCIAL TIMES: EC monitors call for action

BELGRADE/BRUSSELS - "European Community ceasefire monitors in Yugoslavia have strongly criticised the Serbian-led federal army for attacking civilian targets and have called on the EC to make a ‘selective show and use of force’ against the army. In an internal document, leaked to the press in Belgrade, they say: ‘the warship that fires on a defenceless city from a safe distance out to sea must be put in a situation whereby it knows that it can do so at the cost of being promptly sent to the bottom...’ In Brussels yesterday the EC moved to isolate Serbia by restoring aid, credit and trade access to 4 of the 6 Yugoslav republics, leaving the Serbs and, for the moment, their ally Montenegro subject to the sanctions imposed on November 8."

REUTER: UN chief calls for court on right of interference

PARIS - "UN chief Javier Perez de Cuellar on Monday suggested discussion of a bold extension of the right of interference in a country's internal affairs, with a special high-level court deciding when it should apply. He said he intended before leaving his post at the end of the year to propose serious reconsideration of the limits of the right to interfere in a nation's internal affairs on humanitarian grounds... 'We must have access to those unfortunates who suffer, most of all if they suffer unjustly because of war’, the UN Secretary General told French state television in an interview. 'We must think in terms of humankind. This is very important... we must all get together and think, see what we can do’, he said in the interview, to be broadcast on Wednesday. Perez de Cuellar said the right to interfere, used earlier this year to protect Kurds in Iraq, should be applied to the war in Yugoslavia’s breakaway republic of Croatia.”
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

REUTER: EC to explore curbs on East European asylum-seekers

THE HAGUE - "European Community interior ministers agreed on Monday on the need to reclassify some states, particularly in East Europe, as 'safe countries' to help stem the flow of asylum-seekers to the West. The ministers agreed the EC should study how to produce a list of countries once seen as repressive but now regarded as safe, to reduce the grounds for emigrants claiming they were fleeing persecution at home. The idea will be put to EC leaders at next week's Maastricht summit as part of a document on harmonising immigration and asylum policies in the 12-nation bloc, Dutch officials said."

THE INDEPENDENT: De Michelis backs social opt-out for UK

BRUSSELS - "Britain could be offered an opt-out on social policy to allow the European Community to move ahead smoothly - and intact - towards a federal future, Gianni De Michelis, the Italian foreign Minister, suggested yesterday. During a break in the final negotiations ahead of next week’s Maastricht summit, Mr De Michelis told THE INDEPENDENT that social policy was the only issue still threatening a deal on a treaty on political union. On all other matters, he could discern compromises, he said. Arguing with characteristic passion, Mr De Michelis said it was vital that either Britain was persuaded to drop its opposition to the social proposals or that a special opt-out mechanism was found... Mr De Michelis said: 'It would be a terrible mistake, as we go in the direction of deepening the integration process, to pay the price of losing one of our partners. We have to find a way for the participation of all members while also pursuing that integration'."