

February 19, 1993

**To First Deputy of the
Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine**

V.V. Durdynets

Dear Vasyl Vasylivych,

Per your request, I am sending you additional information in a follow-up to the analysis of possible consequences of alternative approaches to Ukraine's nuclear policy.

The solution of these issues requires a well-rounded expert assessment of a wide range of aspects of the complex problem of nuclear disarmament. If possible, experts from different fields relevant to the issue must be engaged to produce precise assessments.

In making primarily political conclusions about possible consequences of different types of solutions to the problem, the MFA relied on data at its disposal, although they are mostly approximations. However, even these indicators allow to make certain conclusions.

The Ministry continues to participate in relevant negotiations and contacts regarding the fate of nuclear weapons, located on the territory of Ukraine, and to deeply analyze this issue. We will continue to inform the Verkhovna Rada accordingly.

Attachment: the abovementioned, on 6 pages.

Respectfully,

Minister A. M. Zlenko

[signature]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ON POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO UKRAINE'S NUCLEAR POLICY

1. Undoubtedly, the development of a nuclear missile complex in Ukraine would require considerable capital investments, although the exact amount is difficult to determine at this stage. Appropriate calculations must be made by relevant experts.

According to expert estimates made on the basis of open source materials in the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the direct costs associated with the creation and build-up of the nuclear missile complex in the Soviet Union between 1943 and 1963, amounted to 1 trillion rubles in the prices of that period. It must be noted that prisoner

labor was widely used in implementing nuclear programs. In the United States, about 100 billion dollars was spent during the initial stage of creating the nuclear missile complex. According to estimates by American experts, about 1 billion dollars is required to build a storage facility for weapon-grade nuclear materials, while reprocessing of nuclear material from warheads requires 400-500 million dollars annually.

Since Ukraine already possesses about one third of the necessary components required for the nuclear missile complex (there are no elements for the production of solid and liquid rocket fuel, nuclear warheads, other key elements of the program^[1]), the cost of the construction of the entire complex will be commensurate, adjusted for current prices.

The MFA considers that expenditures on non-productive goals could substantially undermine efforts aimed at conducting social and economic reforms in our country, especially in present financial and economic conditions.

According to estimates of the experts of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the cost of implementing a comprehensive program of elimination of nuclear missile weapons in Ukraine, including expenses for social needs (construction of housing, social facilities, training new skills, etc.) would amount to approximately 5.6 billion of Ukrainian karbovantsi, in prices of the second quarter of 1992. If carried out in the United States, in American prices, such project would entail a cost of approximately 2.2 billion dollars. It has been estimated that just the maintenance of the existing nuclear missile complex of Ukraine for the period of 7 years requires around 5 billion karbovantsi.^[2]

At present, the United States has announced its intention to extend to Ukraine 175 million dollars in aid for the elimination of nuclear weapons, on condition of their full destruction. Negotiations are underway to provide Ukraine with [additional] 150 million dollars in aid to pay for social aspects of this comprehensive program.

It is evident that these funds, and any possible western and non-western credits for the conversion of military industry, will not be extended to Ukraine, should Ukraine declare itself a nuclear state.

2. Ukraine's political decision to change its status to that of a country that possesses nuclear weapons (today, the international understanding is that Ukraine is a country that has not yet joined the NPT and that does not have nuclear weapons of its own, but that nuclear weapons are temporarily deployed on its territory under the operational control not of Ukraine, but of the Joint Command of Strategic Forces of the CIS), would inevitably provoke a negative international political reaction, political, diplomatic, and economic pressure on Ukraine, as well as a possible introduction of certain political, financial-economic sanctions even at this stage.

A move toward the implementation of a Ukrainian nuclear weapons program would lead to increasing pressure and sanctions, the way it is done, for example, in relation to North Korea, India, Pakistan, Republic of South Africa, partially even Israel, with which [states], according to existing international nonproliferation regime, it is

prohibited to trade certain materials, military and dual-use technology and know-how, and to cooperate in these fields. Countries, which do that [cooperate with proliferators], themselves fall under sanctions of member-states of the London Club (nuclear suppliers).

We must account for the possibility that in the final stages of creating a full production cycle of nuclear materials and developing other components of a nuclear weapons program, in addition to large-scale or comprehensive sanctions, military action may be undertaken against certain facilities in Ukraine, similar to the attack on nuclear facilities in Iraq, and, in a somewhat different context, Libya. In this case, the means of attack would not have to be necessarily nuclear, so such an action could be undertaken not only by nuclear states but by any state that felt “overly” threatened by the changed circumstances.

Certainly, nuclear forces of any state become targets of the best forces of its potential adversaries. Nuclear states use nuclear weapons for this purpose. The possibility of using them preventively is determined by a specific military and political situation during a standoff. Although in the past (during the Caribbean crisis³¹ for instance, or in cases of mistaken warning about a nuclear strike by an adversary) we managed to avoid an actual preventive strike, a future possibility should not be ruled out entirely, since it is difficult to predict the nature of possible complications in relations, specific circumstances affecting decision-making of leaders on different levels, and other factors that could define a hypothetical crisis situation “on the eve of a possible preventive nuclear strike.”

Thus, a country's non-nuclear status by itself somewhat reduces a hypothetical possibility of nuclear use against it by a nuclear state (in international relations, there is well-known practice whereby members of the “nuclear club” undertake a commitment not to use their nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries.) Even during a possible military conflict between a “nuclear” and “non-nuclear” state, it is hard to imagine that nuclear weapons would be used against a non-nuclear state. At the same time, a “threshold” status of certain states (and even more so, a formal declaration on joining the “nuclear club”) inevitably renders such a state an object of increased attention, including from a military perspective, from all states that perceive it as a threat to their security.

Forecasting behavior of two nuclear states in a possible conflict, from the perspective of likelihood of either one of them using nuclear weapons, is very difficult. Today, only some [nuclear] states (China and Russia) have undertaken an unilateral commitment not to use nuclear weapons first, which does not rule out the possibility that they could deploy such weapons in response.

3. The universally recognized status of a nuclear [weapons] state that currently applies to five states, which tested nuclear weapons before January 1, 1967, provides them with certain advantages in international affairs. They carry special responsibility for maintaining peace and security, which means their position, in one way or another, is taken into account in deciding practically all international issues.

If Ukraine could also receive an universally recognized status of a nuclear [weapons] state, we could predict that it would wield considerable weight in deciding international issues solely due to its possession of nuclear weapons. However, considering the inevitably severe negative attitude of other countries to Ukraine's attempts to gain such a status, its standing in international affairs would be negligible. An example of such seeming paradox could be seen in the attitude toward the Soviet Union during the period of greatest escalation of ideological and military standoff, say, in the early 80s. The reputation of the USSR as an aggressive state, the "evil empire" resulted in a negative attitude toward it, which seriously impacted Soviet Union's domestic and international standing and its capacity to "advance" its ideas in the world. Nonetheless, as a nuclear state it, undoubtedly, had considerable influence in deciding certain important international issues.

The case is complicated by the fact that the USSR and now Russia are de facto and de jure nuclear states, recognized by the international community. Ukraine is not recognized as a nuclear state on legal grounds (proving otherwise would be very difficult, if not impossible). Certainly, world's leading nations, both nuclear and non-nuclear, will employ all possible means to prevent Ukraine from acquiring the status of a nuclear state, including the abovementioned political and economic sanctions, pressure, blockade, and possibly military action of "preventive" nature.

4. The extent of additional guarantees of Ukraine's national security from the nuclear states depend on the course of relevant negotiations with these states and willingness to achieve mutually acceptable results. One should realize that there are certain mechanisms and documents in the world and Europe today, both politically and legally binding, which are aimed at ensuring international and national security of states that participate in international affairs. Obviously, they do not always work effectively. However, in modern circumstances it is rather difficult to undertake military actions against another state without the support of the international community, since sharply negative reaction to such actions could lead to unanticipated, sometimes even counterproductive consequences. Even such great states as the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, do not venture to use military force without proper authorization by the UN Security Council, or, at least, regional organizations (support of the Organization of American States toward the U.S. armed action against Grenada). Under such circumstances, even Russia would find it hard to move beyond political and economic pressure.

[Ukraine's national security could, to some extent, be guaranteed (absolute guarantees are practically impossible to obtain) by strengthening these international mechanisms and documents, as well as by additional guarantees from nuclear states, which, in case they are given a high public profile, would be difficult to violate even in case of a severe confrontation.

5. As mentioned in Para. 1, the maintenance of the existing nuclear missile complex in Ukraine (without a significant capital investment into the development of the missing elements) requires approximately 5 billion karbovantsi over 7 years. Approximately the same amount needs to be spent on the implementation of a comprehensive program for the destruction of nuclear missile systems, deployed in

Ukraine. Afterward, the funds that would have been spent on maintaining the nuclear missile complex, could be used, among other things, for re-equipping the material and technical basis of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other needs of domestic development of our state.

6. In case Ukraine adopts a decision to acquire the status of a nuclear weapons state, it will not avoid accusations of violating the nuclear non-proliferation regime, even though Ukraine is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime is defined not only by the NPT, but also by relevant rules, norms, and procedures, developed by member-states of the London Club, Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), other similar organizations and groups.

As mentioned above, it is now generally recognized that nuclear [weapons] states are those states that tested nuclear weapons before January 1, 1967. Other states are considered non-nuclear. The international community is very concerned by the possibility of one non-nuclear country acquiring the nuclear status, which would pave the way for other "threshold" states.

It is practically impossible to maintain normal trade, economic, scientific, and technical relations in the field of peaceful use of atomic energy and space with states, not parties to the NPT, even harsher measures could be expected toward a violator of the non-proliferation regime, which is quite clearly defined and formalized by the members of the London Club, Zanger Committee, etc.

^[1] The MFA analysis here is imprecise: Pavlograd Chemical Plant in Ukraine produced solid rocket fuel. -- Mariana Budjeryn

^[2] The USD equivalent of this figure is difficult to calculate since Ukraine was suffering from hyperinflation in 1992-1993 and there is no indication in the document as to when the calculations were carried out. Assuming that calculations were carried out in January 1993 when the official exchange rate stipulated by the National Bank of Ukraine was 640 karvobantsi to 1USD, 5 billion karvobantsi would amount to about 7.8 million USD. Most likely, however, the calculations were done in 1992, and considering the average exchange rate of 208 karbovantsi to 1USD for that year, the amount would convert to 24 million USD, a more likely figure for maintaining strategic nuclear forces in Ukraine over 7 years. -- Mariana Budjeryn

^[3] Cuban Missile Crisis. -- Mariana Budjeryn