



It would appear that not all of our partners understand why Ukraine raises these questions, what constitutes the basis for its demands. Perhaps it would be useful, in connection with Ukraine's future accession to the NPT Treaty, to take a few minutes of your time in order to clarify our view of the problem of nuclear arms located in Ukraine.

II

The situation surrounding nuclear arms located in Ukraine is unique, without precedents in world history. For the first time a state, which together with other states - successors of the former USSR, has the right to be nuclear, pursues a course towards a non-nuclear status. Furthermore, nuclear weapons, which are located on the territory of this state, Ukraine, do not belong to any other state and have only been brought under operational control of the Joint Command of the C.I.S. Strategic Forces.

In declining nuclear arms, this indisputably effective instrument of containing any potential aggressor, Ukraine has an undeniable right to demand from the nuclear states a guarantee of its national security.

At stake is a legally binding political document, to be accepted at the highest level by the nuclear powers, and first of all by Russia and the U.S.A., committing these countries to the non-use of nuclear weapons against Ukraine, to the non-use of conventional armed forces or the threat of force against it, to refrain from economic pressure in the resolution of contentious questions, to respect territorial integrity and the non-violability of Ukraine's frontiers.

The commitments outlined here only restate generally accepted principles of international law, particularly as stated in the CSCE Final Act of 1975 and the Paris Charter for the New Europe. But it is important for us that they be restated in the context of future assumption by Ukraine of the status of a non-nuclear weapons state.

As indicated by discussions in the Committees of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament), as long as this question remains unclarified, a significant part of parliamentary deputies is not ready to proceed with the ratification of the START and NPT Treaties.

Here we cannot show haste. We must convince the deputies by facts, not by words.

III

Ukraine did not participate in decisions that led to the location on its territory of the third largest, in terms of capacity, strategic missile force on the world. But at the same time, the Ukrainian people were forced to finance the nuclear armaments race of the former Soviet Union at the cost of their well-being and economic development.

What is in fact being demanded of us now is that we ought to finance a grandiose program associated with the elimination of these weapons. At stake is not simply a destruction of strategic offensive weapons, taking into account requirements of ecological safety and of economic viability, a task which we would have to undertake anyway, but the undertaking of extremely complex procedures, requiring huge expenditures, procedures which were established by the START Treaty specifically for the purpose of preventing the former USSR to circumvent its provisions.

One way or another, strategic nuclear weapons on the territory of Ukraine will have to be eliminated. However, we have the right to count on realistic assistance, adequate in terms of our expenditures in destroying such weapons.

So far, we have not received from the West a single cent for this purpose. Is the West not interested in the earliest elimination of nuclear weapons on our soil? It is well known that we cannot manage this task alone.

We are grateful to the U.S.A. for their offer of 175 million dollars in financial and technical assistance for the destruction

of nuclear weapons. But, clearly this amount would in no way cover Ukraine's anticipated costs and we expect that other world states, and nuclear states in particular, will join the U.S.A. in this matter. In this connection, we came up with the initiative to establish a special International Nuclear Disarmament Fund.

Surely, no one should expect from us that in this complex economic situation the priority will be given to the reduction of nuclear weapons and not to the establishing a foundation for a sound, socially oriented market economy. It must be openly stated that taking into account a crisis in our economy, Ukraine can assign from its budget only limited funds for the implementation of the program of elimination of strategic weapons.

IV

The next issue concerns the determination of the further use of the highly enriched uranium and plutonium from strategic warheads that are located in Ukraine, and from tactical warheads that were removed to Russia for disassembly. For us this question of principal significance.

Ukraine does not exercise operational control over the strategic forces located on its territory and, consequently, does not control nuclear warheads in the context of Article II of the START Treaty. At the same time, all components of the nuclear warheads that will be subject to disassembly and destruction, are Ukraine's property. We are only interested, following the disassembly and destruction of nuclear warheads, in the use of such components for the solution of Ukraine's economic development problems and particularly in securing fuel for the Ukrainian nuclear power stations. Negotiations on this issue with the Russian Federation have begun and we hope that their final results will be positive.