



Numerous problems have to be resolved on the road to full nuclear disarmament. And we are the first country to travel this road. The problems are those of financing and ecological guarantees: the processing of Ukrainian plutonium from nuclear warheads into fuel for our nuclear electric stations. And we have yet to receive a reply to questions such as: do we destroy our nuclear weapons with the Russians alone? Or with the participation of American specialists? (I think you can guess our preference.) Does the destruction of nuclear weapons take place in Russia? Or do we build special facilities in Ukraine for this purpose?

Only one question has been more or less settled: Ukraine as a successor state to the USSR has to receive guarantees of its security in return for the destruction of its nuclear weapons. These guarantees have to be a legally binding document signed between Ukraine and the nuclear powers. A document which could serve as an example in this respect is the multilateral agreement between Austria and the nuclear powers in 1955. In other words, we will ask the nuclear powers to sign a multilateral agreement to guarantee the territorial integrity and security of Ukraine. We were in slavery too long, and we spilt too much blood to give up our right to arms so easily, which relates to that which is most sacred for us: the right to defend our national sovereignty.

We have understood, quite clearly, that the generous act of Ukraine becoming a non-nuclear state has failed to impress anyone. Nuclear countries certainly did not follow our example. And it is utopian to think that the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers will diminish after we destroy our weapons. But we will not, despite all, retreat from our goal of becoming a non-nuclear state. However we would like to have a determining voice in setting the agenda in reaching this goal.

UKRAINE'S SECURITY IN THE WORLD ORDER

Finally, a word or two about Ukraine in the international context. We understand the war in the Balkans to be but a miniature of the developments which could have unfolded in the former USSR. The Western world is perhaps sincere in

trying to prevent bloody confrontation in Eastern Europe. It does not know how to achieve this nor is it particularly imaginative in its methods to reach this goal.

The West seeks a reliable gendarme to restore order in the post-Soviet chaos. Many in the West still consider Russia to be the master of order. The West appears to have learned nothing from past experience. Recall when the West placed all its hopes on Gorbachev when everyone knew his days were numbered. Recall President Bush's speech in Kyiv several weeks before the collapse of the USSR: he told Ukrainians, a nation that lost millions to Stalinist terror, that Gorbachev and the USSR was a guarantor of our liberties! Today the orientation is again on Moscow: the G-7 not only promises but delivers billions to Russia. President Clinton urges creditors to forgive Russia large parts of its debt. The CIS in the eyes of some Western leaders is synonymous with Russia, and thus Russia has to be strong so it can control events within the CIS, and even beyond - within the borders of the former socialist camp.

I refer you to the document "The Main Principles of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation" which states that: "It would be the height of levity and lack of responsibility to reconcile oneself with the fact that the command of strategic forces of the former USSR is not regulated". The document implies one nuclear power in CIS and calls for the "maximum level of integration in all spheres within the former republics of the USSR".

Russia's ambitions are supported by the West. Western politicians appear to be most interested in having all questions of world politics decided in Russia's favour. Yugoslavia is a case in point. The West has allowed Russia to seize the initiative. Russia appears to favour a peaceful settlement of the conflict but, in reality, it is strengthening the aggressive side. NATO's head, Mr. Werner said recently "NATO should do nothing that could be used there (in Russia) by reactionary forces to make an enemy of NATO. They (the Russians) must not get the impression that we wish to create a ring around Russia". This sounds wonderful and peaceful.

However, if the West allows Russia to become responsible for security of the former USSR and if it underestimates the role of Ukraine in the stabilization of Central and Eastern Europe, then we may well return to the times when Berlin was divided by a wall and Western Europe was ringed by nuclear submarines.

There is a Russian-Afghan war in Tadjikistan. The Russian-Moldovan conflict has just recently subsided. On the Abkhasian-Georgian front, Russian mercenaries are playing a leading role. Russian cossacks are fighting on the Serbian side in Bosnia and Croatia. The West does not appear to see or hear this -- and you expect us to accept Russia as a guarantor of stability in the region!

It is true that when the Supreme Soviet of Russia declared Sevastopol a Russian city and Ukraine turned to the Security Council, the answer was in favour of Ukraine. However, it is not certain how developments in Sevastopol will unfold. The only thing which saves us from conflict with Russia is the position of President Yeltsin.

Yeltsin seems to share the goals of Russia's Parliament, but differs on the means. The same goals can be achieved through economic pressure. I am referring to political demands which may be advanced as a precondition of Ukraine obtaining supplies of Russian oil and gas. It is not a coincidence that the economic union between Russia, Ukraine and Belarus was proposed by Russia during the Sevastopol crisis. The economic union is a pitfall of our independence. Economic blackmail in the form of threats to turn off oil and gas is a more effective mechanism than resolutions by Russia's parliament. The goal here is the same: not to give the newly independent states the ability to pursue an independent foreign policy, and to ensure Russia's dominant influence in financial, political, and cultural spheres. It should be clearly understood that Ukraine will resist the restoration of any supra-state structure such as the USSR. Let me quote from