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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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November 8, 1991



INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM: ED A. HEWETT

SUBJECT: Ukrainian Approach to Defense Matters

Phillip Zelikow stopped by today to debrief me and John Gordon on a four and one-half hour meeting he had in Geneva last weekend with [redacted]

[redacted] (b)(1) What they had to say was in many ways much less alarming than what we hear in random statements from political leaders. I thought it important that you have a summary of the conversation as grist for your mill as we approach the issue over the next few weeks of how to deal with republics.

[redacted] (b)(1)

Both struck Philip as serious, responsible, people trying to get something done, rather than simply to make a point. And both are concerned that the West misunderstands what Ukraine is about, in part because Ukrainian officials have spoken rather loosely on these matters.

Here are the key points:

- The Ukrainians have put together a five-year plan for defense, at the end of which they intend to be a nuclear-free state with a conventional force of possibly 300-320 thousand men. Higher figures, they say, were never under serious consideration.
- In Phase 1 of the plan, during 1991-92, they would move quite slowly on many matters:
 - They would immediately sign the NPT and agree to IAEA safeguards on existing nuclear weapons for as long as such weapons are in Ukraine.

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- Draft legislation governing Ukrainian armed forces, and the provision of social guarantees for demobilized soldiers.
- Take over the border guards, railroad troops, KGB and MVD (already accomplished).
- Become fully informed on what nuclear weapons are now in Ukraine (they have already had what they regard as good discussions with the SRF commander)
- Possibly of greater importance is what they would not do or expect in this phase.
 - They would make no attempt to acquire control of conventional military units. Moscow would keep control of those units.
 - Nor would they seek to force Moscow to cut forces, although they would welcome cuts under CFE.
 - They would respect the center's right to control, and move at will, nuclear weapons (indeed they say such movements are already occurring).
 - They are asking for a "procedural veto" (similar to that operating in NATO) over the use of nuclear weapons located on their territory. All they ask here is for a veto that is credible for their domestic constituency.
- In **Phase 2**, which goes from 1992-1995, they would begin the process of taking control of existing forces, and of creating their own forces.
 - They would seek to negotiate a takeover of the administration of the three military districts in Ukraine, but would not seek to take over operational control, which would remain in the hands of the center. They would also urge upon Moscow to cut the size of these forces.
 - They would make no effort to take over the Black Sea Fleet. They know there is a problem here, in part because this involves nuclear weapons, but also because the Black Sea involves Russia as well as Ukraine. They are thinking now that it might be best to negotiate collective control over that fleet.
- In **Phase 3**, which would go from 1995(sic)-1996, they would complete a total takeover of armed forces on their territory. They estimate that now they have 900,000 troops on Ukrainian soil, and they hope for an army a third that size. Phillip did not have the impression that they had actually estimated the cost of

such an army, but they are very worried about the financial aspects of their problem. They are also concerned that they will end up with 600,000 unemployed soldiers (either those who stay or Ukrainians who return from duty elsewhere).

- They emphasized that they would like to see all nuclear weapons out by 1996, and tactical nukes out as soon as possible. In response to a direct question, they said that they would raise no objection if nuclear weapons were simply moved to Russia. Their concern right now is that the seven-year period of implementation of START is way too long; they would prefer to see START limits reached in four years.
- They have had good negotiations with the center and with Russia. Relations with Shaposhnikov seem to be good; they do not trust Lobov, who they see as an old thinker. They get along very well with Silaev and Kobets. In their negotiations they are finding sympathizers at all levels, and some opponents. In their view, the biggest problem is the politicians on all sides, who are given to over-simplify, and sometimes over-dramatize, the issues.
- They hope for an inter-republican summit some time this year in which Gorbachev would bless the notion of republican-based armed forces, and they think they have a good chance at such a summit.

Phillip's meeting was in advance of a Harvard group (Blackwill, Ash Carter, Bill Hogan, Zelikow) which will be visiting Kiev in December to discuss a broad range of national security issues. The Ukrainians are eager for such a visit as a way to educate themselves and those who work with them on the nuances of the many issues they now face.

cc: John Gordon
David Gompert