

On statements by Ukrainian members of parliament in Washington about issues with START

On September 15-16, two seminars on disarmament issues were held in Washington, organized by the Atlantic Council and the Global Outlook research center, which delegates of the Supreme Soviets of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan participated in.

The sensational nature of these seminars was enhanced by the statement by the Ukrainian members of parliament Y. Kostenko and V. Tolubko on the position of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine towards the START Treaty, the Lisbon Protocol, and the further status of START on the territory of Ukraine.

The main point of their statement was as follows.

1. In its current form, the START Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol do not satisfy a significant part of the members of the Ukrainian parliament and their ratification looks very challenging.
2. In concrete terms, according to Kostenko, the head of the deputies' group of the Ukrainian parliament on the issue of disarmament, the introduction of the following amendments to the START Treaty in the process of its consideration by the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine is inevitable:
 - a. The rejection of the seven-year strategic offensive weapons reduction period established by the Treaty and the agreements of a new timeline for the elimination of the strategic offensive weapons for Ukraine and the other republics, taking into account, first of all, their specific economic situations;
 - b. The revision of the terms that provided for the elimination of ICBM silos, bearing in mind their further use for purposes pertaining to the national economy;
 - c. Changing the requirements on the mandatory elimination under international supervision of ballistic missiles' warheads, slated for reduction by the Treaty;
 - d. The transfer to Kyiv of weapons-grade uranium and plutonium extracted from the warheads, removed from Ukrainian territory, which the Ukrainian side intends to use for nuclear energy, as well as to export;
 - e. Security for the liquidation of the ballistic missiles deployed in Ukraine and their warheads at the facilities which must be specially built in Ukraine for this purpose, with the financial and technical support of the West, and particularly the U.S.;
 - f. The revision of the provisions on the method of the financing of inspection activities for the Treaty;
3. With regard to compliance with a key provision of the Lisbon protocol- about the accession, in particular, of Ukraine to the Nonproliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear state, that is, by the statements of Kostenko and Tolubko, would be possible only in the event of the provision on the side of the U.S. and all other nuclear powers of additional security guarantees for Ukraine. That said, they especially emphasized that Ukraine could not get such guarantees within the framework of the CIS without changing their neutral status.
4. The Ukrainian deputies directly stated that "Ukraine's acquisition of non-nuclear status is an extremely complex and long-term process, requiring solutions for whole range of political, legal, scientific, technical, and economic problems, and

also the creation of a new mechanism for ensuring Ukraine's national security." In doing so, they argued that for the foreseeable historical perspective the conversation would be by no means about the complete nuclear disarmament of Ukraine, and the retention of its status as a "temporary nuclear power."

To the questions of the American side of how does such a new approach connect with the commitments given by L. Kravchuk on the elimination of the strategic offensive weapons on Ukrainian territory no later than the conclusion of the seven-year reduction period stipulated by the Treaty, Kostenko and Tolubko explained that this obligation correlated to the corresponding documents adopted by the Ukrainian parliament, and not one of those made mention of the seven-year timespan for reductions. In addition, in a wider political context, Kostenko and Tolubko justified the preservation of nuclear weapons in Ukraine for a practically indefinite period by the need to increase Kyiv's influence in international affairs. The "temporary nuclear status" of Ukraine, in their view, makes the West "more susceptible" to Kyiv's requests in regard to economic aid.

5. The Ukrainian members of parliaments' speech resulted in serious concerns from the American experts.

In a conversation with the Russian representative, Senator Nunn's closest advisor, Robert Bell, noted that the development of events in the scenario proposed by the Ukrainian deputies is unsuitable for the United States. The American side will carefully monitor possible changes in the official position of the Ukrainian government, in light of such sentiments in the Supreme Soviet. As a means of a preventative nature, the U.S. Congress will formalize in the Law on the Authorization of Budget Appropriation for the needs of the Department of Defense a provision directly linking the allocation of economic aid to Ukraine, and also Belarus and Kazakhstan, with strict compliance to the START Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol.

6. Representatives of Belarus and Kazakhstan who participated in the discussions reacted extremely negatively to Ukrainian deputies' statements. At the same time, they supported the proposal of the Russian side to conduct proceedings to an early ratification in Moscow, Minsk, and Almaty on START and the Lisbon Protocol, which with the participation of the Americans creates an atmosphere of additional political pressure in Kyiv.

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