

Report
on the results of the Ukrainian-American political consultations
(6-8 January 1993, Washington)

The next stage of the Ukrainian-American political consultations, which were a continuation of the bilateral consultations started in April 1992 in Kiev, took place at the initiative of the US State Department.

The delegation of Ukraine took part in them; it consisted of the head of the National committee for disarmament affairs, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs B.I. Tarasyuk (head of delegation), Deputy Minister of Defense I.V. Bazar, chief consultant of the President of Ukraine office on international issues Y. F. Malek, and Director of the USA and Canada Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Yu. V. Bogaevskii.

The consultations, which were held in the State Department, National Security Council and Defense Department, were also attended by the Ambassador of Ukraine to the United States O. G. Bilorus, Minister Counsellor of the Embassy V.P. Kachinsky and military attaché of the Embassy I. P. Smeshko.

There was a fruitful and constructive discussion of a wide range of political and military-political issues related, in particular, to the reduction of strategic offensive nuclear weapons; the previous results of the development of bilateral cooperation after the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries were summed up, and the prospects for the continuation of the political dialogue at all levels were determined.

Almost all meetings, without exception, raised issues of repayment of the external debt of the former USSR, Ukraine's participation in the CIS, our attitude to the START-2 Treaty signed between the United States and the Russian Federation, the possible use of military force by the United States to ensure compliance with UN Security Council sanctions against the FRY, the problem of European cooperation, and the role of the CSCE and other European structures in the creation of a collective security system. The Americans paid special attention to the state and prospects of development of Ukrainian-Russian relations and our assessment of events in the CIS countries.

On January 8, the head of the delegation together with the Deputy Defense Minister I. V. Bizhan and the Ambassador of Ukraine O. G. Bilorus was received in the White House by US President

George Bush, who was given a personal letter from the President of Ukraine L. M. Kravchuk – a response to the letter of the President of the United States of December 4, 1992.

During the 20-minute conversation, which was also attended by the chief of the White House staff, former Secretary of State James Baker, adviser to the President on national security issues General B. Scowcroft, Secretary of State L. Eagleburger, Bush, underscoring "the high authority of Ukraine in American society," stressed that the development of relations with Ukraine should remain "one of the main priorities of US foreign policy." He assured our delegation that he would do everything in his power to ensure that the development of democratic and partnership relations between our countries would be maintained and continued by the new US administration.

Taking all this into account, the last official meeting with the current US President was a significant result of the consultations.

Content and results of the consultations

The delegation had to negotiate under conditions of not only political, but also massive information pressure from the leading US media, which was intensified and inspired by some Russian media, an outright anti-Ukrainian campaign. In particular, the newspaper "Izvestia" even predicted the "failure" of the mission of the Ukrainian delegation.

This atmosphere fully influenced the course of the consultations, especially during the negotiations in the State Department with the US delegation headed by Deputy Secretary of State for International Policy Frank Wisner.

The discussion focused mainly on the prospects for ratification by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the Treaty on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms (START), the Lisbon Protocol and Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The goal of our delegation was to obtain from the United States clear written guarantees of the national security of Ukraine in case of its nuclear-free status.

The discussion of these issues took place quite fundamentally, sometimes taking a sharp character. This was due to the position of the American side, in particular its leader, who resorted to overt pressure on our delegation, saying that the "delay" in Ukraine's ratification of START-1 could lead to "serious consequences" in bilateral relations.

Stressing that he personally and "no one in the current US administration" does not question the commitment of the Ukrainian authorities to ratify the START Treaties and the NPT, F. Wisner, at the same time, in a somewhat ultimatum form said that in case of providing such

guarantees the American side did "everything that could be done" and therefore not being sure in the fate of these treaties, "does not have a desire" to continue to move along a road that has "led to a dead end". Our arguments that providing Ukraine with the necessary security guarantees before ratification could stimulate a positive solution of this issue, he considered as "endless demands," which, so to speak, the American side "does not want to accept any more." F. Wisner refused to provide the text of the draft of the future US administration statement on guarantees, limiting himself to assurances that such a statement contains everything that Ukraine expects.

Under these circumstances, the delegation of Ukraine had to take a more principled position and stated that it did not accept the pressure exerted on it. Obviously, not expecting such turn, the head of the US delegation asked to interrupt consultations till the next day.

The continuation of consultations was complicated by the publication in the "Washington Post" of an article entitled "The Administration rejects the request of Ukraine related to the ratification of the START-1 Treaty", which contained, in particular, references to the unnamed official representative of the State Department, who, according to the author of the article, said that the US Administration is not going to "negotiate ratification" in exchange for guarantees. In this regard, the delegation of Ukraine expressed its strong protest to the head of the US delegation and stated that the entire responsibility for the distortion of the purpose of its visit to the United States and actual failure of the very important consultations lies entirely on the American side. At the same time, we stressed that if the American delegation does not refute this claim, our delegation reserved the right to make a statement in response to the press.

This formulation of the question certainly influenced the head of the US delegation, who finally assured us that the "Washington Post" article will be refuted, which was done on the same day by the press secretary of the State Department.

Despite this, F. Wisner said that the United States would immediately, as soon as the Verkhovna Rada ratified the Treaty and approved its accession to the NPT, "quickly and officially" announce publicly the statement regarding guarantees that we expected. Our delegation continued to insist that such a declaration should be made before ratification. It was a critical situation, which forced F. Wisner to withdraw from his tough position, and, after a one-on-one conversation initiated by him between the heads of two delegations, complete consultations in a more constructive way. Later, he handed over to the head of the Ukrainian delegation an official letter outlining the main content of the future US statement.

The main focus of the conversations in the Department of Defense, in particular, with the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General C. Powell, his deputy, General R. McCaffrey, Deputy Secretary of Defense P. Wolfowitz, General Burns, Director of the intelligence Department

General G. Clapper, with whom I.V. Bizhan met separately, were issues of practical implementation of the process of nuclear disarmament of Ukraine. They talked about specific forms of technical and expert assistance from the United States. In a separate conversation with us, General Burns, in particular, stressed that the United States "will be ready" to provide such assistance as soon as the "political barriers" are overcome, bearing in mind the rapid ratification of these agreements. We agreed that all issues will be discussed in detail during his next visit to Kiev.

Our interlocutors gave a positive assessment to the statement of the President of Ukraine in connection with the signing of the START-2 Treaty between Russia and the United States and Ukraine's participation in the UN peacekeeping forces located in the former Yugoslavia.

The main argument they made in their demand to accelerate Ukraine's ratification of START-I and accession to the NPT was that the "basic guarantee" of Ukraine's national security was not the possession of nuclear weapons, but the creation of effective armed forces equipped with modern weapons, ensuring the success of democratic reforms and the transition to a market economy.

Quite substantive and constructive consultations were held at the White House with the participation of the Director of the Office of Policy Planning of the State Department D. Ross, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Defense Libby, Assistant Secretary of Defense for national security Hadley, deputy chief of staff of the National Security Council Burns and the Director of the Division of Eastern Europe and Independent States (CIS) L. Nepper.

Considerable attention was paid to the discussion of conceptual aspects of democratic partnership in Ukrainian-American relations. The discussion on this issue, proposed by the delegation of Ukraine, helped to clarify the understanding of this issue by our partners, to reach a common agreement that, despite possible differences, in the national interest it is necessary to preserve and consolidate the course outlined during the meeting at the highest level for the development of equal, democratic partnership between our two states.

The American side had to admit that it made a mistake, considering Ukrainian-American relations through the prism of its relations with Russia and forgetting that Ukraine has its own interests.

The concept of our military doctrine, the state of construction of our own Armed Forces, and the economic situation in Ukraine aroused great interest from the American side. In this regard, our interlocutors positively assessed the activities of the new government of Ukraine. As noted, the new Prime Minister of Ukraine "is making more systematic efforts to implement reforms," "Prime Minister Kuchma got off to a great start," but Ukraine "is opening itself up to investment too slowly." We were assured that the United States will continue to provide Ukraine with

humanitarian and technical assistance, to supply the necessary medicines, and to help overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl accident. However, they would like to know more specifically about our economic needs. The Americans stressed that one of the industries where the US could provide Ukraine with the necessary technical assistance is the conversion of military-industrial complex enterprises, but for this they need a list of our priorities.

According to our partners, Ukraine as a whole already has a good base for foreign investment, but we should not hope for significant assistance from US government sources and countries that are part of the so-called "seven" without reaching agreements with the IMF. It is necessary to count mainly on receiving private investments. American businessmen, they stressed, are still not sure that in Ukraine there is a proper legal framework that would guarantee the safety of their investments.

On our part, the main emphasis was placed on the exceptional importance of consolidating the elements of mutual trust in bilateral relations and taking into account the interests of both sides. In this regard, we raised the issue of the injustice of the decision taken by the UN General Assembly on the size of Ukraine's contribution to the budget of this organization and expressed our dissatisfaction with the US position on this issue of principle for us. We also drew attention to the fact that there were facts involving ignoring the fair interests and positions of Ukraine on the part of American representatives in the OSCE bodies. The United States stressed that there had been a "certain misunderstanding" and that it was "seeking" a review of the decision already taken by the General Assembly in favour of Ukraine.

Other issues related to the development of bilateral relations were also raised. Representatives of the White House spoke in favor of an early visit of the Prime Minister of Ukraine to the United States. An agreement was also reached on the expediency of holding bilateral consultations twice a year, alternately in Kiev and Washington. In this regard, the US side confirmed its proposal to hold in early February, with the participation of representatives of the new US administration, thorough consultations in Washington in order to summarize the development of bilateral relations during the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries, analyze the practical implementation of agreements and intergovernmental agreements that were signed during the official visit of the President of Ukraine L. M. Kravchuk to the United States in May 1992, and determine the direction of the development of these relations in the near future.

The American side confirmed its interest in developing more active bilateral military cooperation.

During a meeting in the US Congress with the head of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives L. Hamilton, our interlocutors were mainly interested in the current

situation in Ukraine, the course of economic reforms, the prospects of ratification by the Verkhovna Rada of the START-I Treaty and accession to the NPT, Ukraine's attitude to the CIS and the draft of the Charter, the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, and etc.

Stressing that the Congress has a "great interest" in the development of US relations with Ukraine and that the US considers Ukraine a "very important country," L. Hamilton noted that such consultations should stimulate the positive development of bilateral relations.

Senator R. Lugar also noted the importance and timeliness of bilateral political consultations in his conversation with us. He, in particular, said that the US Senate is working towards "accelerating the process of strengthening relations between our countries." Expressing personal "concern" about the fate of Ukraine's ratification of the START-1 Treaty (he showed particular interest in the balance of forces in the Verkhovna Rada on this issue), R. Lugar at the same time supported our position on the issues of obtaining security guarantees, compensation for tactical nuclear charges transferred to Russia and START. The Senator stressed that "safety of nuclear weapons" remains the most important issue for them. He assured that the United States is ready to consider how they can help Ukraine.

Using this meeting, which was also attended by representatives of Senator Nunn and the newly appointed Secretary of Defense in the new administration L. Aspin, our delegation once again stressed the importance of obtaining from the United States the relevant security guarantees of Ukraine before the Verkhovna Rada would begin consideration of the START-1 Treaty. In this regard, we expressed the hope that the Senator will personally assist in this matter. For his part, R. Lugar advised us to raise this issue during a meeting with the US President.

R. Lugar apparently played a role in instructing G. Bush to hand over to us the draft text of the future US statement on guarantees.

It was also useful to meet with J. Walker, who leads the Eastern Europe group in the transition team of the new Secretary of State W. Christopher. In our conversation she, in particular, said that relations with independent countries – the republics of the former USSR – will be "on the list of priorities" in the activities of the new leadership of the State Department.

Answering our question about the position of the new Administration regarding Ukraine, J. Walker stressed that they are interested in the economic and political success of Ukraine and this interest is "closely connected" with their own national interests of the United States. "Ukraine is very important for us because it is Ukraine," she said. She argued this thesis by adding that Ukraine has an "extremely important" geographical location. Stressing the need to ratify START-I as soon as possible and to accede to the NPT, she noted that the Clinton Administration was "closely monitoring" Ukraine's compliance with its obligations. They "share" our concerns about security issues, but do not put forward "any conditions" until such time as

ratification occurs, after which "some problems" may arise in relations with the new administration. We passed through her a personal letter to W. Christopher from the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs with an invitation to carry out an official working visit to Ukraine. They stressed that the Ukrainian side is ready to develop contacts with the new US Administration at all levels.

Information and explanatory work

According to the program, the delegation visited in Washington the Carnegie Center for International Peace and the Atlantic Council, where the head of the delegation and the Deputy Minister of Defense of Ukraine addressed the participants and answered numerous questions. The head of the delegation met with leading journalists of the United States, appeared on an ABC TV show "Nightline", gave an interview to the correspondent of the program "Ostankino", and organized a press conference. On January 6, the delegation met with a group of representatives of the local Ukrainian community. The visit of the delegation was widely covered in various media.

RESULTS

1. At all meetings and conversations our interlocutors stressed the importance and mutual benefit of such consultations and spoke in favour of their continuation on a permanent basis. The fact that they took place at the final stage of the previous US Administration, during the active transfer of power to the new Administration, reinforces their political importance.
2. The visit of the delegation of Ukraine presented an exceptional opportunity once again at all levels to convey our principled position on nuclear policy issues and to present our argumentation of a wide range of problems associated with this process. At the same time, the delegation had the opportunity to find out the mood and the individual positions of our interlocutors, the general attitude towards Ukraine and the possible development of bilateral relations in the short term.
3. Given these important points, there is every reason to believe that this visit was fully justified and the assigned tasks were fulfilled.

PROPOSALS

In order to consolidate the positive aspects outlined as a result of these consultations, it is advisable to take the following measures:

1. To insist on the continuation of work on the draft US statement on guarantees to Ukraine on the inclusion in the text of important elements for us.

2. To receive in Kiev in February this year a delegation of technical experts headed by General Burns for a comprehensive discussion of the practical issues of US financial and technical assistance in the nuclear disarmament of Ukraine.
3. On the basis of the proposals of the American side to discuss the possibility of organizing a working visit to the USA by Prime Minister of Ukraine L. D. Kuchma at the end of February – early March of this year, or at another convenient time for the American side to discuss a wide range of issues of trade, economic, financial and scientific technical cooperation.
4. To work in the direction of organizing visits to Ukraine in 1993 by new US President B. Clinton and Secretary of State W. Christopher.
5. To work with the American side on the possibility of organizing an official visit of the President of Ukraine to the United States in the second half of this year.
6. To intensify work through the relevant ministries and agencies to expand the contractual legal framework of bilateral relations. It is necessary, in particular, to focus on the preparation of a new package of intergovernmental agreements on the following issues: the avoidance of double taxation, mutual protection of investments, cooperation in the fields of aviation, operational safety at peaceful nuclear installations of Ukraine, and in the field of culture and information.

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