

[November 5, 1993]

Dear Leonid Makarovich,

We highly appreciated your support in the troubled days for Russia. I express my deep gratitude to you in this regard. I think that our countries still have a lot of difficulties to overcome, which means that strong friendship and cooperation between our fraternal states are of particular importance.

I am sure that our Massandra agreements have become a major milestone in the development of such relations. This is how they were perceived by the wider world community, including in the United States of America.

We are deeply convinced that life poses the problem of the implementation of these agreements. At the same time, in one issue - I mean nuclear weapons - the circumstances are such that now energetic steps are required, even ahead of what we decided with you in Massandra.

The fact is that according to the conclusion of the highest scientific authorities, the state of nuclear weapons in Ukraine is increasingly alarming. We are talking about the threat of disasters that exceed the scale of Chernobyl. I'm sure you have enough information on that. Of course, we are ready to provide you with the information that we have.

I am convinced that the accelerated export of all nuclear warheads to the territory of Russia meets the interests of Russia and Ukraine and the broad interests of international security. This would be best done as from 1 January 1994 and implemented, as we agreed, within 24 months. I would like to hope that such an agreement, among other things, would help to accelerate the ratification process of the START-I Treaty in the Supreme Council of Ukraine.

I gave the relevant instructions to the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation. If we meet with your understanding, its representatives would be ready to immediately hold talks with the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, as stipulated by the "Basic principles of utilization of nuclear warheads of Strategic nuclear forces deployed in Ukraine," in order to develop a specific timetable for the withdrawal of all nuclear warheads from the territory of Ukraine within the specified time.

I have also instructed the Ministry of Atomic Energy of the Russian Federation to start preparing a contract with Ukrainian colleagues for the supply of fuel assemblies (FA) to Ukraine for 1994. The development of such a contract is also provided for in the "Basic principles of utilization of nuclear warheads of Strategic nuclear forces stationed in Ukraine".

I think it is clear that it is important to implement the "Protocol on the settlement of the problems of the Black Sea Fleet" of September 3, 1993 as soon as possible. We talked about this recently in Moscow. The settlement of this problem, as we have decided, would play a huge role in strengthening the relations of friendship between our peoples.

In general, I think it is necessary to vigorously promote the whole range of relations between our two countries on the path of brotherhood and cooperation.

B. Yeltsin

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