

Excerpt from
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The Lost Nuclear Missile Shield of Ukraine

(Chronicle, insights, memories)

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Chapter Five

The political and legal aspect of the elimination of missile-borne nuclear weapons
in Ukraine and the military service of strategic missile specialists in 1996

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The official visits of the Ministers of Defense of the U.S.A. W. Perry and of the Russian Federation (R.F.) P. Grachev on January 4-5, 1996, in the capital of Ukraine were the first time in history that trilateral negotiations took place with the Ministers of Defense of Ukraine, the United States of America and the Russian Federation. Airplanes with the official military delegation of the U.S.A., led by the Minister of Defense William Perry, and the Russian Federation, led by the Minister of Defense, Army General Pavel Grachev, landed at Boryspil Airport on the morning of January 4. After a welcoming ceremony for the Ministers of Defense of the three countries, a very rigorous timetable was expected. And although it was reported that the main focus of the military leaderships would be concentrated on nuclear disarmament issues, and the negotiations themselves would take place behind closed doors, in the negotiations there was not only talk of nuclear weapons.

At the time of the visit, the leadership of the defense departments met with President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma, Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk, and Minister of Defense Valeriy Shmarov. During the course of the meeting, there was talk about the interim results of the implementation of the trilateral agreement for the leaders of Ukraine, Russia and the U.S., which had been signed two years before, and which had, in fact, opened the era of nuclear disarmament. In compliance with this, Ukraine, which had certain obligations under the START-I Treaty, was due to remove the nuclear warheads to the Russian Federation with the aim of eliminating them and reprocessing their nuclear materials to fuel Ukrainian nuclear power plants. The Russian Federation would have to provide Ukraine with compensation in the form of fuel rods and the United States, for its part, would give certain funds to finance the production of the first shipment of nuclear fuel. This process had already been successfully carried out, and at the time a sufficiently large part of Ukraine's needs for such fuel had already been provided for by this account. However, there were several problems here. A certain number of fuel rods were to be supplied in exchange for a certain number of nuclear warheads. And in this process there were difficulties connected to the production industry in Russia.

At the time of the meetings, early assurances on the part of the U.S. to provide assistance to Ukraine, in compliance with the Nunn-Lugar laws adopted in the U.S, were also confirmed. The Ministers of Defense exchanged views with the President of Ukraine regarding

issues that represented a political interest not only for Ukraine, the U.S., and Russia, but also for the international community. These were European security, the situation in Bosnia, participation in peaceful reconciliation, cooperation issues, and the contribution of each state to this process. There was also talk about holding joint exercises, provided for by the signing of a scheduled plan by the Ministers of Defense of Ukraine and the U.S. for bilateral cooperation between military personnel in 1996, and trilateral cooperation, with the participation of Russia, within the framework of the program "Partnership for Peace."

On the same day, negotiations were held at the Ministry of Defense and trilateral meetings of the Ministers of Defense of Ukraine, Russia, and the U.S., after which a document on cooperation was signed. Valeriy Shamrov and Pavel Grachev signed 26 documents, which was recognized in Kyiv as a breakthrough in relations with Russia in the military field. Indeed, it was possible to conclude an agreement about military cooperation even before the signing of the wide-scale agreement on cooperation between Kyiv and Moscow. In addition, an agreement was reached about the next meeting of the Ministers of Defense of Ukraine and Russia, which would be held in Transcarpathia in March.

The key result of the negotiations between William Perry and Valeriy Shamrov was the signing of the schedule of cooperation for the two defense departments in 1996. The Ministers of Defense of Ukraine and the U.S. noted the activation of Ukrainian-American cooperation in the military sector, and the convergence of many aspects of international life, including on the issues of both general and European security, the Bosnian conflict and the means of its joint resolution, the development of a control regime for the process of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. William Perry emphasized the promising outlook for bilateral and trilateral relations in the area of nuclear disarmament. He noted the desire of the American side to cooperate with the Ukrainian defense department in various ways, including joint exercises. According to the Minister of Defense of the U.S., Ukraine had clearly met its obligations for disarmament, which he personally was able to ascertain by visiting their nuclear facilities in 1994 and 1995.

Valeriy Shamrov emphasized that Ukraine was carrying out in full its obligations under the Trilateral Statement and the START-I Treaty. The schedule for removal of nuclear weapons

was fully in progress. The Minister of Defense noted the activation and successful development of relations with Russia in the military sphere. A plan for military cooperation in 1996 was also signed with the Minister of Defense [of Russia], and the progress of implementing mutual obligations was analyzed, although he [Shmarov] stressed that not everything was serene in our relations.

With Ukraine and Russia in compliance with the Trilateral Statement of the Presidents of Ukraine, Russia, and the U.S., the Minister of Defense of Russia Pavel Grachev stated that there remained 26 percent of nuclear warheads to remove. This process, he stressed, in general had proceeded in seamless accordance with the schedule and taking into account security arrangements, although he acknowledged the existence of certain problems, which were not predominately connected with the military, but with other departments, or depended on political decisions. This, primarily, concerned the return to Ukraine of fuel for nuclear power plants after the reprocessing of Ukrainian nuclear warheads. Pavel Grachev also emphasized the existence of certain complexities in the process of transferring strategic bombers from the Ukrainian side to Russia, which was rated from different sides by different amounts. Unresolved, in his opinion, remained the issue of the financing and support for missile warning systems (SPRN), which were located on the territory of Ukraine and slated for transfer to Russian military personnel.

The next day (January 5), the Ministers of Defense visited the city of Pervomaysk, where they supervised the process of destroying military launch silos for intercontinental ballistic missiles. In the stands under flags of the three countries, the ministers were quite unanimous in their speeches. William Perry emphasized that in the place of the missile silo, in as little as two years, it would be possible to reap a harvest of wheat, if desired. Pavel Grachev added that every blasted silo produces 450 tons of naval steel [for reuse], and Minister of Defense of Ukraine Valeriy Shmarov stressed that Ukraine was implementing the commitments for nuclear disarmament and had already finished all preparatory work, which had to precede the destruction of the silos and strategic missile aircraft. Then the three ministers simultaneously turned the keys and heard a muffled explosion, which marked the destruction of the silo, which in its time contained one of 130 strategic SS-19 rockets. Each of these rockets could deliver six

nuclear warheads to the territory of the United States with individual target guidance. Therefore, one could fully understand the pragmatism of the Americans, who invested not so much in Ukraine's nuclear disarmament as in ensuring their own security. This action was planned within the framework of Ukraine's disarmament, the legal framework of which was established in 1993 at the time of the ratification of the START-I Treaty by the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine, and this was already the fourth operational silo that had been destroyed in accordance with the trilateral agreement on the nuclear disarmament of Ukraine. All procedures for destroying the silo installations for intercontinental ballistic missiles that remained in Ukraine as an inheritance from the USSR were in general environmentally safe. In 1995 a contract was negotiated at a cost of 25 million dollars, under which the American company Bechtel was supposed to handle the process of dismantling the SS-19 rocket systems. The point was to destroy the missile silos and recultivate the land at the place of their deployment. The American company Bechtel cooperated in this matter with the Ukrainian association Kryvbasvybkhprom designing the technology by which the silo in Pervomaysk was destroyed.

The destruction of the silo was supposed to be carried out by technology developed by Ukrainian and German specialists, who executed the demolition of the silo with small charges in association with water-jet cutting. This process, despite the doubts of a number of representatives of parliament, was completely safe from both a technological and environmental viewpoint. We were obliged to adhere to all of the agreements and to undertake our commitments. The silos were destroyed by means of dismantlement to a depth of eight meters and detonation to a depth of six meters. At that point in time, there still existed (more precisely, was considered) the possibility of the further utilization of 64 percent of the launch silos (after the destruction of the necessary 36% under the START-I Treaty) in the national economic interests of Ukraine.

In response to the statement of Ukrainian parliament member Stepan Khmara, who declared his readiness to challenge the destruction of the missile launch silos at the cost of his own life, Valeriy Shamrov commented that it is necessary to value your life and not to give it away in vain. The government's political decision about the destruction of the nuclear arsenal

and the corresponding infrastructure was ratified by parliament, and Stepan Khmara's position was inconsistent. The possibilities for the peaceful use of such facilities, the Minister continued, would be considered by a governmental committee consisting of scientists, specialists, and business executives. However, on this basis, detangling this issue would be difficult. No matter what, he stressed, there was an obligation to eliminate 36 percent of the missile silos in compliance with their international obligations, and only after this could one attempt to use the remaining silos for the goal of conversion. However, already at the site of this demonstration detonation of the silos, representatives of the American embassy distributed a press-release to those present, in which they asserted that by November 1998 all 130 missile silos for the SS-19 missiles by Pervomaysk and Khmelnytskyi should be destroyed.

In addition to this issue of the physical destruction of strategic offensive weapons and accompanying infrastructure, the Ministers of Defense became familiarized with the problems of social welfare for the military missile specialists and also took part in celebrations for the opening of the first part of a residential cottage town (125 cottages). This residential complex was constructed with funds which were allocated by the government of the United States for the missile specialists who were slated for dismissal due to the reductions of the strategic weapons. Another 136 cottages were planned for construction in Pervomaysk by August 1, 1996. And in the residential construction of the first stage, in addition to this city, another 195 apartments in Khmelnytskyi were included, of which 135 had already been built, and the construction of another 60 were to be completed in 1996. The general costs of the implementation of these two contacts amounted to around 30 million dollars. Valeriy Shmarov, William Perry, and Pavel Grachev held a joint press-conference in Pervomaysk.

What fate awaited the missile silos? On what (or whom) would this depend?

On January 5, 1996, by Pervomaysk, with the participation of the three Ministers of Defense from Ukraine, the United States of America, and the Russian Federation, a demonstration destruction of a missile launch silo for an intercontinental ballistic missile was carried out. With this step, Ukraine once again demonstrated to the whole world its commitment to its international obligations regarding the destruction of the nuclear weapons located on its

territory. After this extraordinary event and the sharp and even radical statements of some politicians in Ukraine, not all media outlets covered the issue objectively. Some provided wishful thinking, others, not having sufficient objective information on this issue, offered their own not always reasonable assumptions. Apparently, it is appropriate, even if only briefly, to analyze the possible directions of the development of the situation with the rocket silos in Ukraine, but primarily, it is necessary to remind the reader that the basis for the implementation of such a step as the destruction of the missile launch facilities was:

1. The adherence of Ukraine to the treaty between the USSR and the U.S., START-1 (or SNV-1), signed in Moscow on July 31, 1991 and the protocol to it, signed in Lisbon on the part of Ukraine on May 23, 1992, which was ratified by the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine on November 18, 1993.
2. The Trilateral Statement of the Presidents of Ukraine, the U.S., and Russia, signed in Moscow on January 14, 1994.
3. The comprehensive program of the phased reduction and elimination of ground- and air-based nuclear weapons (approved by a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine from the 18th of November 1993), which had made provisions for the maximum elimination of equipment and recoverable resources with the aim of their reuse in the national economy.

In compliance with the words of the Decree of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine of November 18, 1993 (paragraph 6) on the elimination of a number of delivery vehicles for strategic offensive weapons (ICBMs connected with both missile launch facilities and heavy bombers), the elimination of only 36 percent of nuclear weapon delivery vehicles was envisioned. In view of the words of the aforementioned Decree of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine (paragraph 11.5), the Ukrainian delegation raised questions at the meeting of the Joint Implementation and Inspection Commission (SKVE) in Geneva on changing the procedure for eliminating the missile silos, which was stipulated in the START-I Treaty (the destruction of missile launch facilities by explosion at a depth of six meters, or dismantlement at a depth of 8 meters). At the last (at this time) meeting of

the SKVE, no positive decision was reached on changing the specified procedures for the destruction of missile launch silos.

Fulfilling the assignment of the Cabinet of Ministers of September 8, 1995, No. 11820/49 about the development of proposals for the utilization of missile launch facilities for civilian use, the Ministry of Finance together with the Ministry of Defense worked on and agreed to the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of December 20, 1995, No. 1030 ("On the creation of an interdepartmental commission on the issue of using missile launch facilities for peaceful purposes"). The specified commission consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Finance and the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The commission should, after examining the whole range of problems and projects, submit the agreed propositions on the use of missile launch silos for peaceful purposes to the Cabinet of Ministers within three months. Finishing the work, the Ministry of Defense appealed to the administrations of regions on whose territory the operating sites of ICBM RS-18s are deployed with a request from local agencies and enterprises to submit bids on plans for the use of existing facilities and their infrastructure for their designated purpose. However, at that time information began to be spread intensively, including through mass media, about the fact that participants in the Treaty on the reduction of strategic offensive weapons (START-I), namely the U.S.A. and the Russian Federation, had already begun their practically full-scale implementation, with each side having eliminated about 20 missile launch facilities. At the same time, they purposefully emphasized that the experience gained testified to the fact that no options had been found for the utilization of missile launch silos for peaceful purposes either in the U.S. or in Russia. As for Ukraine, at this time they concluded the implementation program for the preparatory stage for the comprehensive program of the phased reduction and elimination of ground- and air-based nuclear weapons, one of which was the development and fine-tuning of the technology for the elimination of missile launch facilities, which:

Firstly, provide environmental and physical security for the surrounding facilities (they will allow for the safe elimination of the facilities of the missile launch silos over a distance of no more than 50 meters from inhabited buildings);

Secondly, provide for the nearly complete seizure of equipment and materials for re-use for civilian purposes or for processing and disposal;

Thirdly, elimination technologies for the first time in world practice will ensure not only the destruction and demolition of the building sites of ICBMs, but also a full cycle of re-cultivation and recovery for the plots of land on which the missile launch silos were located, with their further transfer to land use.

In accordance with the requirements of environmental legislation of Ukraine and the relevant section of the Comprehensive program (“Environmental Safety”), the Ministry of Defense with the Ministry of Environmental Safety of Ukraine, in the context of the preparatory stage, developed measures that would provide for environmental safety in the implementation of the process of eliminating the nuclear weapons, more specifically:

- Assessments were made of the impact on the environment, both of the individual technological processes of elimination and of the entire cycle of the elimination work;

- The “Regulation on the system for ensuring environmental safety for the implementation of the elimination work” was developed;

- As part of the environmental inspection of the first facilities, which were to be eliminated, the “Methods of environmental control in the process of elimination work” were developed and practically worked out;

- The “Statement on the environmental consequences of the entire cycle of liquidation work for the elimination of the missile complexes for RS-18 ICBMs” was agreed to with the Ministry of Environmental Safety of Ukraine.

In compliance with establishment of the June 27, 1995 Implementation-related agreement between the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and the Ministry of Defense of the U.S., the American side specified an integrating contractor (the company Bechtel) to implement the program for eliminating the operational missile complexes in Ukraine.

The concluded provisional agreements and the agreement between the Ministries of Defense of Ukraine and the U.S.A. provided for implementation of the most effective plan for organizing the liquidation work, by which the entire cycle of work – from liquidation of the missile launch facilities to restoration of the land on which they were located – was to be carried out by the Ukrainian subcontracting companies and organizations. The financing of all these works would be carried out with funds from the U.S.A., which were allocated by the Nunn-Lugar program. This made it possible, without using funds from Ukraine's budget, to create within a period of 4-5 years an additional number (from 1000 to 2000) of job opportunities, both for the enterprises involved and for the military personnel retired from active duty with the 43rd Rocket Army.

The majority of the activities of the preliminary stages of the Comprehensive program in 1995 were carried out with the financial, material, and technical assistance of the U.S. side (the number of concluded contracts, allocated grants, the cost of the delivered equipment, machinery, and material supplies amounted to a cost of around 130 million dollars). This made it possible to save a significant corresponding amount of the budget that was stipulated for the liquidation, and to direct it to resolving the most acute, primarily social, problems for the military personnel of the Strategic nuclear forces of Ukraine. Taking into account the use of funds released in this way, they practically managed a slight increase in the completion rate in 1995 of the plan for providing housing to the military personnel of the 43rd Rocket Army. The implementation of the seized secondary resources, subject to the proper fulfillment of marketing and the effectiveness of the established system for implementation, also made it possible to get a significant number of additional budget items funded. This work was already being carried out by the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine: a plan had been devised for the use of the equipment and secondary resources, which would be extracted during fulfillment of the dismantlement and elimination work. The plan provided for separate schemes for the disposal and implementation of precious metals, scrap metal from ferrous and non-ferrous metals, and released equipment and technology. According to a provisional estimate on January 1, 1995, it was possible to get from 8 to 10 million dollars for the results of this work. These funds could also be aimed at housing development for the military personnel of the strategic nuclear forces

of Ukraine, and also for solving other social problems of the military personnel and their family members. However, not everything was as good in reality as it had been previously planned on paper.

For impartiality and fairness, it is apparently necessary to, at least in general terms, speak frankly about the shadowy side of the process, which accompanied practically all of the stages of the elimination of nuclear weapons in Ukraine. This is the shadowy side of the process, which was connected with the effectiveness and legitimacy of the use of funds allocated for the elimination of the weapons, and especially of the foreign aid provided. Throughout 1995-1997, practically monthly, this shadowy side accumulated an ever-greater weight, and often became decisive in making not always reasonable, and sometimes extremely detrimental, decisions in general. Against the general background of the extremely conscientious attitude of the majority of professional missile specialists to the fulfillment of all worthwhile tasks, some officials, both among the commanders and administration of the 43rd Rocket Army and in the structures of the headquarters of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, when making a decision did not forget, to put it mildly, about their personal interests. And often it was precisely those personal interests that were decisive. I will briefly explain below, and further specific examples and facts will be given, which subsequently were dealt with by employees of the auditing body and the military prosecutor's office.

The final fate of the missile launch silos remaining after the removal of the missiles was primarily influenced by the Americans. They clearly were aware that the missiles situated in these silos were aimed at targets in the U.S. and took all measures for their full elimination along with the entire infrastructure in order to avoid their possible reconstruction and utilization in the future for their intended use, with certain changes (negative for them) in the political situation. They were prepared to offer Ukraine aid and allocate the required funds for the full elimination of this infrastructure, especially since these funds were a scanty percentage of the annual costs which the U.S. allocated from their budget to counter this powerful nuclear missile group. Therefore, even according to the provisional estimates, the adoption of the decision on the further fate of no less than 50 percent of the missile silos depended upon the U.S. Verification of this was the fact of the distribution (on January 5) by representatives of the

U.S. Embassy of a previously published press release to everyone directly present at the missile launch pad (at the site of the demonstration explosion of a silo near Pervomaysk). [In that press release], it was argued that in Ukraine by November 1998, all 130 missile silos for the SS-19 missiles by Pervomaysk and Khmelnytskyi would be destroyed. Although at that time in Ukraine no final decision had been made on this issue, discussions were ongoing and research was underway, and only 36 percent of the missile silos were subject to elimination, in compliance with our international obligations.

Another 40 percent (and maybe the whole remaining 50%) of this depended directly on the individual leadership of the 43rd Rocket Army and some officials of the structure of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine (the Strategic Nuclear Forces Central Administrative Directorate, the logistic support system, armament). During this period some of the leadership of the structures mentioned above suddenly began to receive (in their words) some inheritance (tens of thousands of dollars) from relatives and friends, and resolved the strategic issues of where to invest them effectively. The (“gifted”) children of these leaders were also unexpectedly chosen to receive free tuition and went to the best universities in the U.S. and Canada. Some military leaders themselves became shareholders of foreign companies that had acted as general contactors in the elimination of nuclear weapons in Ukraine. Their wives, children, and family members became founders (or co-founders) of private companies, like “Julia” and “Strum” in the city of Vinnitsa and “OIK,” a joint engineering company in the city of Dnepropetrovsk. In the form of capital of the shared fund they brought in equipment: a guillotine for cutting metal, a drill press, a grinding and drilling apparatus, and other equipment which they allegedly had previously. They all suddenly showed far greater abilities in this sphere of business, and they began to win practically all tenders for subcontracting work for millions of dollars for the elimination processes and technologies, the dismantling of structures, equipment removal, their removal and implementation, the land reclamation of operational sites and others. That is why these leaders were no less interested than the Americans that all facilities, missile silos, cable lines, and other infrastructures facilities of the strategic nuclear forces be in no case transferred to the national economy or any other civilian enterprises.

[Image of excerpted Ukrainian Document inserted in text here: from V. Mikhtyuk to G.K. Kryuchkov]

To receive the corresponding personal income they had to abolish for American money the private enterprises specially created (for their relatives). This would be indicated much later in dozens of volumes of criminal cases and would be written about in books and in the mass media: Anatoly Ben, Pyotr Tvorun “Special Operation: Zero option,” and others.

But we will have to back to this unpleasant topic more than once. The Americans and the leaders of other foreign firms that took part in the elimination activities in Ukraine, in housing construction and in solving other problems, were very quickly able to understand with which of the military leaders in Ukraine and with which arguments one had to negotiate or solve issues. They used these successfully. This, undoubtedly, became one of the key problems which negatively affected many things, including both the mediocre [бездарное] destruction of all the highly-developed infrastructure of the Strategic Missile Forces in Ukraine and the reduction of the capacity and effectiveness of the use of the aid provided, and much more.

Representatives of the local administration and companies, who wanted and hoped to get some of the infrastructure or facilities of the missile forces for further use in the national economy, there not given access to those facilities, as a rule. Those facilities were not shown to them due to a command or ‘recommendation’ from above (with a reference to secrecy), or specially appointed for this purpose representatives of the military presented [the infrastructure] in such a negative way, with such comments and “drawn up” problems for their future use that people themselves refused to [consider their use]. The main task at this stage was to convince everyone that these facilities would be impossible to use for civilian purposes for the national economy and the only possible option was to leave them for dismantlement and destruction, using the funds of the American aid (and naturally with the explicit win of the above-mentioned companies in the bidding procedure).

I recall from personal experience one incident in connection with this. During yet another business trip (beginning in 1997) to Pervomaysk’s missile division, which I had the

honor to command from December of 1990 to August of 1994, I was approached by one small businessman from the city with whom we had previously met a few times at some city events. He reminded me that during my command tenure he had a small grocery store not far from our military base and was officially engaged in small-scale commerce. Then he began to enthusiastically talk about how vastly his life had changed for the better after he, with the help of administrative officers of the 43rd Rocket Army, had won bids connected with work on the elimination of the missile silos and land reclamation. In addition, he emphasized that he could not have earned that kind of money in his store over the course of ten years. I was able to ply him with two questions, and to my surprise, received very interesting answers to them. To the question of how he managed to enter this area in general, draw up the necessary documents and win the contracts, having no knowledge in this area, even having no office space and having no one under his command (except one salesman). He talked about the fact that he was invited to take part in this by an officer he knew in the army administration, from Vinnitsa. After he (according to him) had agreed to the stipulated terms, he re-registered his company with their help with the specified options for conducting certain work and the provision of special services; all was done from there on practically without him. All the necessary documents were formulated and finalized in Vinnitsa, he only had to sign and authenticate with his seal. When asked how he managed to carry out these jobs, he said even more interesting things. After winning the bid, also practically without his participation, he would appoint a subcontractor (one of the government companies), which had all the necessary capacity and funds for the fulfillment of the required work and subsequently carried out all of this work, receiving the amount already reduced by 30-35%. And his task came down only to the timely transfer of the funds obtained into his account and the account of the subcontractor, obtaining the determined amount of cash and giving it to the representative in Vinnitsa, receiving his 15%, and putting his signature and stamps on the relevant documents. And he had approached me with a request for help in winning yet another bid, which was to be held soon, and his protégé had said that there would be a different winner. In doing so, he stressed that he was even prepared to decrease his percentage of the profit. Hiding my indignation with difficulty, I explained to the man that I would never be engaged in such matters and do not intend to do

so; I advised him to do the same in order to not deal with the prosecutor's office later and to not be subject to prosecution. At that our brief communication ended.

As a specialist who served in the missile forces for about 30 years, who knows well the intended purpose, organization, and opportunities for the use of all the infrastructure of the missile forces stationed in Ukraine, and who has significant practical experience with its operation, I have the moral authority to express my opinion on this issue. I say without any reasonable doubt that in terms of government interests, of course, it would be rational and necessary to preserve a large part of the infrastructure for further use both in the interests of the Ministry of Defense and in the interests of Ukraine's national economy. It might be possible, on special terms, to lease certain elements of the infrastructure and some equipment of the eliminated military units to officers and non-coms in reserve, with their further transfer into their property. It was possible to organize the creation of a new company on the basis of the infrastructure of the eliminated military units with the creation of tens and hundreds of jobs to provide employment for the discharged military personnel. In all these areas, concrete and actually achievable suggestions were developed, taking into account the opinions of many officers and non-coms, who were prepared to embark upon this new business for themselves with great enthusiasm. But, unfortunately, in daily reality, it became clear that the priorities were not the government's interests and recommendations, and all the truly unique infrastructure was incompetently destroyed.

The work of the General Inspectorate of the President of Ukraine for the 43rd Rocket Army.

On February 22, 1996, the scheduled work of the General Inspectorate of the President of Ukraine for the 43rd Rocket Army began. In fact, this was the first experience of work of a fairly large group of generals and officers of the highest government inspectorate for military structures in management, units, and forces of the army. Before this, only individual representatives of the General Military Inspectorate (GVI), represented by specialists of the strategic nuclear forces connected to the military units that were deployed on the territory of Ukraine, were working in army management. In the run-up to the forthcoming work of the General Military Inspectorate, the Deputy Minister of Defense of Ukraine, the Commander of

the 43rd Rocket Army Colonel-General V. Mikhtyk, led a staff meeting. The meeting identified specific tasks for the deputy commanders, heads of departments, and branches of the rocket army in preparation for the upcoming work for the GVI and in preparation of specific information reports on the direction of their duties and areas of personal responsibility. An additional point is that in those same days, the responsibilities of the deputy commanders and other public officials related to the planning and carrying out of the elimination activities were revised and confirmed in written form.

[Excerpted Ukrainian Document from Filatov to Mikhtyuk inserted in text here]

I consider it appropriate to quote verbatim the contents of this document, stored in a personal archive, in order to not feature a full photocopy of it in the book in Ukrainian. So, the approved responsibilities of the Deputy Commander of the 43rd Rocket Army (only the issues of planning and implementing the elimination activities) provided for him:

1. To take part in the development of plans for eliminating the combat missile facilities (BRK), parts, and separate units, conducting special tactical activities before the beginning of the work, to directly provide assistance to the subordinated military bases.
2. To know the status and progress of the work on organizing the elimination of the missile facilities, of the reduction and dismantlement of parts and separate units. Personally lead the committee on the elimination of parts.
3. To organize high quality and safe implementation of all types of work with the nuclear materials, full compliance with all norms and rules for nuclear and environmental safety.

To implement daily management and provide assistance to the commanders of the facilities "S" (after their subordination to the 43rd Rocket Army) and technical maintenance of the division's base for the sending of special armaments to Russia, in preparation for elimination and directly eliminating the special armaments that remain.

4. To organize cooperation with representatives of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation for the destruction of special armaments on the territory of Ukraine in compliance with intergovernmental agreements.
To personally organize the work on the fine-tuning of technologies for the destruction of special armaments in certain military units, train commanders in the methods for organizing this work and ensuring security.
5. To implement direct management of the Treaty implementation support group (GORD) for ensuring the holding of inspections by the Inspectorate groups from the U.S., to represent reports in compliance with the Protocol on eliminating the missile silos and components of missile weaponry (ERV). To periodically personally monitor compliance to the parameters for eliminating the missile silos by the requirements of the START Reduction and Limitation Treaty.
6. To prepare proposals for ZMO-KA, draft documents, take part in working meetings and conversations with representatives from other states and departments on the issue of the provision and utilization of aid, of major construction works, reconstructing and dismantlement of facilities for the fulfillment of the START Reduction and Limitation Treaty.
7. To lead the certification commission of the administration of the Rocket Army, to conduct screenings of the officers and to prepare offers for ZMO-KA for the use and deployment of officers and ensigns in the dismantlement (reduction) of parts and the formation of new structures based on units of the 43rd Rocket Army.
8. To lead the fire protection services and rescue work for all full-time and freelance forces and assets for actions in emergency situations.
9. To organize the effective work of the commission for the prevention of injuries and other accidents during the course of elimination activities.
10. During the work in the commands and units, exercise control of the organize of recording and storing the material resources, of the dismantled equipment, enforcing the legitimacy and fulfillment of the situation of the concluded agreement on the leasing and selling of material resources.

In compliance with the assigned tasks and their own areas of responsibility, everyone prepared information reports for a hearing of the senior officials of the 43rd Rocket Army on February 22, 1996 for the commission of the Inspectorate General under the President of Ukraine, which was lead by the first Deputy General Inspector Colonel-General Vladimir Petrovich Ostapenko. The hearing of senior officials of the Rocket Army and all of the work of the General Military Inspectorate took place as a whole in a normal, working setting, with an examination of the whole set of areas of concern and prepared proposals for their possible resolution. The principal directions of the GVI's work were, first of all, the issues of organizing the entire dismantlement process, the condition of the nuclear weapons, and ensuring nuclear and environmental safety, the readiness of the forces and the means intended to eliminate the consequences of possible emergency situations at the facilities of the 43rd Rocket Army. The issues of the status of the missile weaponry, the procurement of inspection activities, staffing levels for the units and forces of the 43rd Rocket Army, and work with the officers were explored. The issues of the operational and combat readiness of the forces and units of the army, the effectiveness of American aid and its use, the implementation of programs for housing construction and all the complex social problems and issues were not overlooked. Below I will give specific, verbatim information from the contents of the information report of the ZKA (from their report) on the main issues as of 20.02.1996, and also some additional materials, which were already under discussion during the work of the GVI.

Status of nuclear weapons and provisions for nuclear safety in the army

As of February 1996, as part of the nuclear stockpile of the 43rd Rocket Army, there were still 16 (sixteen) warheads (60 RA 105 warheads and 60 AA 102 warheads) which were kept at the stipulated level of combat readiness with full provision for the requirements of nuclear and environmental safety. Of the ten warheads of the 14F355 type, eight warheads were docked to missiles in the 299th missile regiment of the 19th rocket division, and two warheads, in a disassembled state (in blocks), were in storage at the 1509 missile facility. In addition, at the 1509 missile facility, from the total specified

number of warheads in storage, 18 warheads were stored with outdated warranty periods: six warheads with expired shelf lives for the casing (October 1995) and twelve with expired shelf lives for the automation units (August 1993), and in the 1058 missile facility 12 warheads were stored with expired shelf lives on the reactors (February 1995). All six of the 15F13 nose cone types remaining and undocked from the SS-24 missiles were disassembled by block and put in the 1058 missile facility of the 46th rocket division's storage.

In February the work on the undocking and transportation of the last warheads of the 299th missile regiment of the 19th missile division was fully completed. In fact, the work had already been completed both for the 19th missile division and for the 46th missile divisions on the dismantlement of the remaining warheads and the preparation for sending the next scheduled warheads to Russia. All of the work was conducted within a strict time limit, [along] with implementation of the requirements of technological documentation, rules, and safety measures. However, despite the exceedingly large volume of already completed and ongoing work at this time, there were specific serious technical problems that could not be solved for a long time or were only partially solved. Material and technical support for the entire list of necessary materials was almost completely absent. There were no key parts and components for the repair of automotive equipment, which was directly used for transporting warheads from combat positions to the processing area and was also used for the delivery of nuclear ammunition to railway cars. Inexplicably, the issue of the delivery of radio equipment, which we had ordered through American aid and which after the American deliveries were made was delayed in Uman' for several months, was left unresolved for a long period. Apparently, someone really wanted to prevent the delivery of this radio equipment to the missile facilities for practical use by the combat crews in their work on nuclear ammunition and the provision of nuclear security. Everything was shrouded in darkness and a kind of incomprehensible mystery. Even at the level of deputy commander, handling this and resolving the problem was almost impossible; one felt a kind of clear, internal opposition. The military personnel of the 43rd Rocket Army,

between 1992 and March of 1996, in implementing the decision of the government and the Minister of Defense of Ukraine to fulfill the obligations made by our state to the START-I Treaty and the Trilateral Agreement between Ukraine, Russia, and the U.S., carried out a significant amount of exceedingly crucial and dangerous work. First of all, there was the work of undocking, transporting and dismantling the warheads of the SS-19 and SS-24 intercontinental ballistic missiles, sampling hydrogen levels, preparing and sending warheads to the Russian Federation or to the “S” facilities, removing them from alert status and preparing for the elimination of 8 of the 15P035 combat guided missile systems (with SS-19 missiles). More specifically, only within this relatively short period:

- work was completed on the undocking (docking) and transportation of 552 warheads. On some silos, this work was forcibly conducted 3-4 times during this period. This was due both to scheduled work on regular routine maintenance and improvements and on necessary measurements and replacement of components for missiles, warheads and silos with expired warranties, and to various unplanned situations (emergency maintenance on the missiles and silos according to continuously monitored parameters or discovered during periodic remote tests of the silos and missiles);

- work was done on undocking, transporting, and dismantling 46 warheads (from SS-24 missiles), and measuring the levels of hydrogen content in 480 warheads, and moreover, after the measurements, 120 blocks had been re-assembled and the warheads were docked to the missiles;

- 1272 (one thousand two hundred and seventy-two) warheads (more than 20 special reserved trains) were prepared for shipment and sent to the Russian Federation (or first to the “S” facilities, and only afterwards to the Russian Federation;

- 8 missile regiments that had an operational strength of 80 silos with SS-19 missiles and 8 integrated missile regiment command control centers were taken off alert status. At the same time, about nine thousand tons of highly toxic components of rocket fuel were combined, transported, prepared for shipment, and sent; also, 84 missiles were sent, of which 66 had incurred partial neutralization;

– in compliance with the decision of the interdepartmental commission of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Machine-Building, the military industrial complex and conversion [agency] of Ukraine, according to the results of an assessment of the technical condition of the combat missile system in Ukraine (approved on September 6, 1994 by the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine); and 50 platforms for 15F355 warheads were destroyed in missile divisions (35 units in the 19th missile division and 15 in the 46th missile division);

– execution of alert status was carried out in the missile regiments, primarily with the aim of maintaining the existing weapons in a combat-ready and safe condition, ensuring their reliable protection and defense.

Work during this period reached a particularly high intensity in 1994-1996, when it exceeded allowable limits for officers of repair and technical bases by 1.8 - 2 times, for officers of maintenance facilities by 1.5-1.7 times, and for officers of missile regiments supporting the alert status by 1.5-2 times. A sharp reduction in staffing levels of the forces and branches of the rocket army with commissioned personnel led to an increase in the overall load on officers by 3 to 5 times. The officers of the missile maintenance bases, instead of working on dismantling and servicing the warheads with two operational crews, were servicing the same warheads with one crew. There was a similar situation on the technical missile bases of the divisions, where the average duration of daily work was more than 12 hours (with an actual continuous absence of days off). In missile regiments, instead of the maximum permissible regulations for carrying out a tour of duty, 90 days a year, officers carried out active duty for at least 130-135 days a year, and many even up to 150 days a year, practically having no days off for rest and being in constant isolation from their families. Moreover, such a burden fell not only on the shoulders of the officers of the maintenance and technical missile facilities and the missile regiments (although, of course, it was primarily on them), but also on the command, the administrative officers of the missile army, the missile divisions and branches that personally supervised the performance of much of the highly important and especially dangerous work. This fully applied both to all ranks of

the units and branches of special forces and to the administrative area, which arranged for the implementation of all of this work of national importance.

We must not forget that the above-noted work was carried out by military personnel of the forces and units of the 43rd Rocket Army under conditions of insufficient material and financial support; however, all of them were completed within a strict time limit, without violating rules and safety measures, in full compliance with the requirements of technological discipline. According to official data, already at that time, all accident rates for officers and non-coms, primarily caused by the specifics of professional activity (working with nuclear weapons, rocket fuel components, exceeding the duration of carrying a database, etc.), increased sharply. Some officers and non-coms had two-to-three times the number of serious cases with in-patient treatment in hospitals over the course of one year. In just two years over this period, several officers and non-coms between the ages of 30 and 42 died suddenly from illnesses contracted during extensive professional activities: Commander of the group for the transportation and installation of missiles of the 46th Rocket Army Lieutenant Colonel Lanin and Deputy Commander of the [trb] 19th missile division Lieutenant Colonel Pavlov; Warrant Officer Yablokov of military unit 29500 and Lieutenant Colonel Davidenko of military unit 33883; Warrant Officer Chaban of military unit 16613 and Warrant Officer Oleynik of military unit 49476; Major Ryleyev of the OKS, and some others (including several fairly young family members of military personnel). That was the reality and the service of strategic missile specialists. However, in 1996 and in the next two-to-three years, the intensity of work in the 43rd Rocket Army effectively did not decrease, and in some areas even increased. Along with the withdrawal of the combat missile facilities from alert status, the reduction of some branches and military units, and the number of military personnel, an extremely large amount of elimination work had to be done. Simultaneously, it was necessary to continue to maintain the remaining weapons in a combat-ready and safe condition, to deal with the destruction of a large number of special combat training weapons and equipment, etc. And all this was also to be carried

out in conditions of insufficient material and financial support, within a highly restricted time-frame.

The incompetent decision of the Army headquarters (unfortunately, approved by the Deputy Minister of Defense of Ukraine, the commander of the 43rd Rocket Army), on Ref. No. 0212 of 08.29.1995 on the complete elimination of the maintenance bases of two divisions by the end of 1996 that was drafted and sent to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, was completely incomprehensible, or more precisely, fundamentally wrong and incorrect. The specific document was secretly, without the agreement with the deputy commanders (responsible for this extremely important area of activity and even without informing him), prepared and sent to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine by the Chief of Staff of the Army. The complete incompetence of the Chief of Staff of the Army in this matter, his stubborn unwillingness to listen to the opinions of specialists (and incomprehensible support, or maybe the initiative in making such an unreasonable decision on the part of ZMOU-KA) could have led to irreparable consequences.

Firstly, in both divisions (directly within the maintenance bases) there was a huge amount of secret, special instrumentation and equipment for work with nuclear ammunition. There were inspection testing units and racks, simulators, special instruments and equipment with radiating units, special machinery and mobile components, combat training warheads, and much more, on which no decisions had been made yet. It was necessary to solve this during the complex negotiations with representatives of 12 Main Directorate of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, and then destroy part of this instrumentation under their mandatory control.

Secondly, there remained 15 A60 (SS-24) missiles in the 46th missile division, the decision on the further fate of which had not yet been agreed on, and in the 19th missile division for 1997 there were still at least three combat missile systems (three missile regiments). It was impermissible to destroy the platforms of the warheads, as well as their other components (the SAP, active jamming stations, and much more),

which could be used in extreme situations for our country for the possible non-nuclear arming of intercontinental ballistic missiles until full clarity was achieved on these issues. To break up the maintenance bases before the last missile facility in each missile division was removed from alert status, and before the complete destruction of all special equipment, would be not only wrong, but also criminal. It was not clear for whom and for what this was so necessary in Ukraine? Why no one wanted to hear the important and concise arguments of specialists? Where, in whose hands and in what part of the world this special secret weaponry and equipment for the maintaining and arming of nuclear weapons could have ended up, if the missile facilities of the divisions were disbanded at the whim of exceptionally incompetent or exceptionally irresponsible public officials, and all this equipment would remain incomprehensible on whose responsibility?

In order not to be unsubstantiated, but to speak with specific facts and figures, I will give only some quantitative, reliable data, without the provision of special indexes, and particularly manufacturing numbers. In 1996, in compliance with the Agreement between Ukraine and the Russian Federation of 11. 25.1995, 7 (seven) convoys of special equipment and machinery that had previously been used to service nuclear ammunition were exported from Ukraine to Russia. In total, there were 117 wagons (USI - 692 loads, MF - 2769, EO and KIA - 499, spare parts - 48 sets, LU - 4228, KBU - 2289, III - 507). In addition, special equipment and machinery with a total volume of 133 cars was to be destroyed on the territory of Ukraine (under the guidance of representatives of the 12 Main Directorate of the MOD of the RF). With a volume of 50 rail cars at the 332 "S" facility, a volume of 30 rail cars at the 341 "S" facility, a volume of 20 rail cars at the maintenance base of the 46th Missile Division, a volume of 8 rail cars at the maintenance base of the 19th Missile Division and 35 cars in volume at missile arsenal 26, from which this equipment was then delivered for the destruction at the maintenance base of the 46th missile division. Even with the very intense and very difficult, and increased risk of the work (special equipment was destroyed by blasting with concentrated TNT charges, then the remains were crushed by heavy bulldozers,

and some components and devices were destroyed by burning using napalm), for this several months were needed and the military personnel of the maintenance bases of the missile divisions.

[Ukrainian Document inserted in text]

Unfortunately, I must say openly, and in this yet another time, my reasonable proposals were not heard. A few months later, in accordance with the proposals submitted by the Chief of Staff of the 43rd Rocket Army, the organizational directive of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine on the complete disbandment of the maintenance facilities of two missile divisions was received in 1996. Only after this, did I manage, through Herculean efforts, to convince everyone of the fallacy of such a decision and achieve the withdrawal of the issued directive regarding the obviously premature disbandment of the two military units, which for about a year continued to carry out the most important tasks of the national level. Already after the withdrawal of this directive on the baseless dissolution of two maintenance facilities of missile divisions, as of March 10, 1997, the amount of equipment destroyed was only 45 railcar loads (out of a total of 133 railcar loads to be destroyed).

[Courtesy of author, Major General Nikolay Filatov]

[Translated by Sarah Dunn for the National Security Archive]