

**February 18, 1993**

**Statement by Leonid M. Kravchuk, President of  
Ukraine, at the World Economic Forum, Davos, 30  
January 1993: 'How to Prevent the Proliferation of  
Nuclear Weapons'**

**Citation:**

"Statement by Leonid M. Kravchuk, President of Ukraine, at the World Economic Forum, Davos, 30 January 1993: 'How to Prevent the Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons'", February 18, 1993, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, fond 1, delo 7045. Obtained by Mariana Budjeryn.  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/208391>

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

**Original Language:**

English,Ukrainian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Press Release  
Ukraine  
Permanent Mission to the United Nations

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## HOW TO PREVENT THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Statement by Leonid M. Kravchuk, President of Ukraine, at the World Economic Forum, Davos, 30 January 1993

The problem of nuclear weapons proliferation – one of the most pressing problem of our time – causes alarm both among statesmen and world public. This problem focuses attention of Ukraine's political leadership and this country's Parliament. The possibility of increase in number of nuclear weapon states and corresponding increase of the risk of unauthorized use of these weapons or of their use in regional conflicts constitute a real threat to international peace and security.

At present the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the only instrument which the international community can rely on in its efforts to prevent such threat. Special responsibility for universal compliance with the provisions of the NPT lies above all with the nuclear powers and, particularly, the depositaries of the Treaty.

Being aware of the importance of this international instrument and proceeding from the premise that accession to it is in Ukraine's highest interest I have tabled before the Supreme Rada a proposal on Ukraine's accession to the Treaty. Simultaneously proposals concerning ratification of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Offensive Arms (the START Treaty) and the Lisbon Protocol thereto were submitted to the Parliament's consideration.

I

Now intensive hearings of this issue are going on the Supreme Rada's parliamentary commission as well as in the ad-hoc working group. This is a routine process which normally requires certain time.

The Ukraine's Parliament bears grand responsibility to this country's people for scrutinizing all aspects of the START Treaty, the Lisbon Protocol and the NPT and for thorough analyses of all possible implications in these instruments, especially for Ukraine's military security and environmental safety as well as of country's possible financial expenditures stemming from obligations it may assume. After all, it is not simply a matter of a one-third or two-thirds cut in nuclear weapons, which is at stake but of the total elimination of such weapons in Ukraine, something that entails serious consequences in terms of security and even for the very existence of Ukraine as an independent State.

An overwhelming majority of deputies have expressed support for Ukraine's nuclear-free option, which the Supreme Rada proclaimed as long as in 1990. At the same time, however, deputies are insisting on the resolution of certain issues of importance to us before the START Treaty and the NPT will be submitted for final approval by the Parliament.

They refer to the questions of granting by the nuclear powers, that are permanent

members of the United Nations Security Council, to Ukraine the assurance of its national security, of rendering for Ukraine real assistance in funding programmes for the elimination of nuclear weapons on its territory, and of defining the future use of the nuclear components of the strategic and tactical warheads deployed in Ukraine or already removed from its territory for dismantling in Russia.

We have an impression that not all our partners understand why it is Ukraine that is raising these weapons and what its demands are based on. It might be worthwhile to take a few minutes to explain, in view of Ukraine's forthcoming accession to the NPT, our vision of the problem of the nuclear weapons deployed in Ukraine.

## II

The situation around the nuclear weapons, deployed on the territory of Ukraine, is unique and unprecedented in history. For the first time ever a state which, together with other successor states of the former USSR, having the right to be nuclear, is pursuing a policy of achieving non-nuclear status. Moreover, on the territory of this state - Ukraine - already exist nuclear weapons that are placed under the operational control of the Unified Command of the Strategic Forces of the CIS but do not belong to any other side.

Renouncing nuclear weapons, which are undoubtedly an effective means of deterrence against any potential aggressor, Ukraine has an undeniable right to demand from the nuclear powers guarantees of its national security.

What is meant is a legally binding political instrument adopted at the highest level by the nuclear powers, first and foremost Russia and the United States of America, stating that these powers will not use against Ukraine neither nuclear nor conventional weapons or the threat of use of force, will refrain from applying economic pressure in order to resolve any contested issues, and will respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and inviolability of its borders.

Those obligations mainly reiterate generally recognized principles of international law enshrined in particular in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. But it is important for us that they be confirmed in the context of Ukraine's future acquisition of the status of the non-nuclear weapon state. As discussed in the commission of the Supreme Rada show, until this matter is clarified a large number of deputies will not be ready for the START Treaty and the NPT to be submitted for ratification.

We cannot be hasty here. We have to convince the deputies by facts, not words.

## III

Ukraine did not participate in the decision-making process that led to stationing on its territory the third largest missile forces in the world. But at the same time the people of Ukraine were forced, at the cost of their own welfare and economic development, to finance the nuclear arms race of the former Soviet Union.

Now we are actually being forced to finance ourselves a large scale programme of destruction of these weapons. And this presupposes not only the destruction of strategic weapons with regard to the requirement of environmental safety and economic efficiency - that we would have to do anyway - but also compliance with extremely complicated and very expensive procedures, laid down in the START Treaty for the sole purpose of preventing former USSR from circumventing its provisions.

One way or another we shall have to destroy the nuclear arms on the territory of Ukraine. However, in carrying out the destruction of these weapons we are entitled to genuine assistance adequate to our costs.

So far we have not received a single cent from the West for this purpose. But can it really be that the West is not interested in speedy elimination of nuclear weapons, located on our territory? And they know too well that we cannot do this job on our own.

We are grateful to the United States for their offer to provide us financial and technical assistance to the amount of 175 million for the destruction of nuclear weapons. But it is evident that the above mentioned sum will hardly cover all of Ukraine's possible expenses, and we hope that other states, particularly nuclear ones, will join the United States in this endeavor. It is with this aim that we have launched the initiative to establish special international fund for nuclear disarmament.

It can hardly be expected from us that in the grave economic situation we are the priority will be given to nuclear arms destruction rather than to the laying of the foundations of a sound, socially-oriented market economy. It must be said openly that in view of the crisis in our economy Ukraine can only allocate from its own budget limited sums for realization of the programme to eliminate strategic offensive weapons.

The other problem is in the defining of further utilization of the highly enriched uranium and plutonium from the strategic warheads stationed in Ukraine and the tactical warheads that have been taken to Russia for dismantling. This question is of fundamental importance to us.

#### IV

Ukraine does not exercise operational control over the Strategic Forces stationed on its territory and consequently does not control, within the meaning of Article II of the NPT, nuclear warheads. On the other hand, all components of the nuclear warheads that are subject of dismantling and destruction are the property of Ukraine. Our only interest is in usage of the components of the dismantled and destroyed nuclear warheads with the purpose of resolving problems of Ukraine's economic development and, in particular, of providing fuel for Ukraine's nuclear power stations.

Negotiations on this issue with the Russian Federation began recently and we hope that they will end with positive results.[\[1\]](#)

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The resolution of abovementioned issues will facilitate the adoption of a positive decision by the Supreme Rada of Ukraine regarding the accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the ratification of the START Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol, however, delays of some states, on which the resolution of these issues depends, places equal responsibility on these states for the delays in the process of consideration of these important documents in the Ukrainian Parliament.

#### V

Although Ukraine's accession to the NPT will be an important step in strengthening this Treaty, it will not remove the problem of prevention of proliferation of nuclear

weapons in the world.

It is well known that today there are at least a dozen of so-called “threshold” states that are moving toward acquiring their own nuclear weapons or are suspected in doing so. Some of them, according to experts, already have nuclear weapons.

Even given the contemporary level of technical development in these countries, however, it is impossible to build nuclear weapons counting only on one’s own resources. All countries, in developing nuclear weapons programs, relied on the support of certain nuclear states. Some countries that are suspected in having developed nuclear weapons already and which are not parties of the NPT receive large-scale assistance from nuclear states in military, economic and other realms and have not come under a real pressure on behalf of the latter to induce them to join this Treaty and relinquish their nuclear ambitions.

Ukraine believes that in our time no state, especially no nuclear state, can conduct the dual policy, customary in the recent past, in the field of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. We are convinced that all nuclear states without exception should follow the path of Ukraine – the path of acquiring in the future, preferably in the near future, the non-nuclear status, should conduct a single consistent policy regarding the universal application of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and accession to this international instrument of all states of the world.

[\[1\]](#) The preceding text is the English translation of Kravchuk’s speech by Ukraine’s Permanent Mission to the United Nation from Ukrainian, as is presented as is. Since this document, as obtained by the Wilson Center is incomplete, what follows is Wilson Center’s own translation from the Ukrainian original of the speech. [Ed.]