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**PROLIFERATION AND NONPROLIFERATION IN UKRAINE:
IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPEAN AND U.S. SECURITY**

Stephen J. Blank

July 1, 1994

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FOREWORD

Limiting nuclear proliferation is a vital goal of U.S. security policy. With this in mind, the Strategic Studies Institute cosponsored a conference at the University of Pittsburgh on March 16-17, 1994 to deal with the issues involved in achieving this objective. An additional U.S. objective is the stabilization of relationships among the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. These two issues come together in Ukraine which, upon achieving independence, found itself in possession of nuclear missiles that were positioned in the former Soviet Union and on Ukraine's territory. Ukraine was reluctant to relinquish control of them for security reasons. This monograph, presented at the conference, seeks to explain why Ukraine originally sought to retain the weapons and then, in 1994, agreed to dismantle them in return for compensation and the very limited security guarantees that exist under the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty. The author also examines the nature of Russia's threat to Ukraine and the implications of the new agreement for U.S. policy vis-a-vis Ukraine and Russia.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this study on nonproliferation and the security of Ukraine and hopes that it will contribute to the ongoing discussion of these issues of international importance.

JOHN W. MOUNTCASTLE
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

STEPHEN J. BLANK has been an Associate Professor of Russian/Soviet Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute since 1989. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Blank was Associate Professor for Soviet Studies at the Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education of Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base. Dr. Blank's M.A. and Ph.D. are in Russian history from the University of Chicago. He has published numerous articles on Soviet military and foreign policies, notably in the Third World, and is the author of a forthcoming study of the Soviet Commissariat of Nationalities and editor of books on Soviet foreign policies in Latin America and on the future of the Soviet military.

SUMMARY

When the Soviet Union collapsed the new Ukrainian state inherited the nuclear weapons that had been deployed on its territory. Through 1993 there was growing support in Ukraine for the establishment of a quid pro quo. Many Ukrainians felt that, in return for denuclearization, Ukraine should receive security and economic guarantees from both Washington and Moscow. Until then it would hold back on dismantling and transferring the weapons to Russia, signing the START treaties, and ratifying the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty. But in January 1994, after considerable coaxing and pressure, Ukraine agreed with Russia and the United States to proceed along those lines. This monograph examines the reasoning behind that decision and the implications of it for Ukraine's security and for its relationship with the United States.

Ukraine's primary reasons for retaining the weapons were to deter Russia and to obtain U.S. guarantees and attention. However, because it never even began successful economic reform, Ukraine's economic condition has sharply deteriorated--to the degree that it now finds itself menaced by both economic collapse and ethnic separatism by its Russian population, mainly in Crimea. Despite its best efforts, Ukraine did not secure binding American guarantees of security. Meanwhile, compensation for its expenses is contingent upon ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty which has yet to be consummated.

Ukraine's politics remain deadlocked as does its security profile and it increasingly seems that Kiev believes America will ease its demands for substantial economic reform in order to protect it against the Russian threat. That threat is a real one deriving its power from the omnipresent Russian denial that Ukraine is or should be a sovereign state. Russia has employed nuclear blackmail, economic warfare, political and diplomatic campaigns, and incidents in the Black Sea to isolate Ukraine, diminish its sovereignty, and induce, if not coerce, it back into a military-political union with Russia in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Therefore, Moscow regarded the prospect of Ukrainian nuclearization with unfeigned alarm. And precisely for that reason Ukraine's weapons, like Russia's, were used essentially as instruments of political bargaining and deterrence.

However, with the conclusion of the tripartite accord in January 1994, the United States has committed itself to involvement in all aspects of the Russo-Ukrainian relationship that are crucial to the security of the CIS and Europe. Perhaps without realizing it, the United States has become a permanent factor in the regional security equation. The United States is seen by Kiev, whatever U.S. policy is in actuality, as being able to guarantee Ukraine against Moscow's pressures. At the same time, Ukraine's obdurate failure to reform its economy and its deepening political gridlock at home mean that the greatest and

most immediate threats to it are ones that the United States can do little about. While it was appropriate for the U.S. Government to engage itself seriously with Ukraine, the task of ensuring Ukraine's security is so immense and growing so much more difficult due to Kiev's own misrule, that it may not be possible for the United States to avoid entanglement in what could easily be another Yugoslav type situation, albeit in countries with nuclear systems on their soil.

PROLIFERATION AND NONPROLIFERATION IN UKRAINE: IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPEAN AND U.S. SECURITY

Ukraine inherited nuclear weapons when the Soviet Union collapsed. It did not develop them and had originally proclaimed its intention to denuclearize. But during 1993 the Ukrainian public and elite increasingly became strongly inclined to retain control and ownership over these weapons, although Ukraine formally agreed to accept the START I treaty, dismantle, and then transfer control over the weapons to Russia. Yet, in January 1994, Ukrainian President Kravchuk signed a treaty with the United States and Russia to dismantle these weapons and return them to Russia in return for substantial economic and security guarantees. Accordingly we must explain why Kravchuk initially maneuvered to keep the weapons and why he ultimately gave them up and apparently renounced the decidedly ambivalent, if not double, game relating to retaining the weapons.

The sequence of moves leading to Ukrainian nuclearization was as much political as military. Today nuclear weapons are instruments of political bargaining as much as they are of military threat and deterrence.¹ This insight helps clarify Ukraine's course of action. The substantial literature on motives for proliferation also helps explain Ukraine's motives, e.g. William Overholt's "checklist" for a state to go nuclear comports well with Ukraine's.² The decision to forego nuclear weapons can also be explained. So too can we clarify the implications of this whole cycle for Ukrainian security, proliferation and deterrence. Undoubtedly this issue also has profound implications and repercussions for European security and the future of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Since the NPT comes up for renewal and review in 1995, Ukraine's ultimate decision has critical importance outside of Europe as well.

Ukraine's Objectives.

First we must understand Ukraine's purposes for keeping its nuclear weapons and obtaining control over them. Ukraine's recently adopted military doctrine stated its intention to be a nonnuclear state. It also renounced any territorial claims against anyone and claimed that Ukraine had no enemies. Indeed the doctrine calls for nuclear free zones and regional security in Eastern Europe. But any state "whose consistent policy constitutes a military danger for Ukraine, leads to the interference in internal matters, and encroaches on its territorial integrity or national interests" is described as an enemy.³ Obviously that means Russia. But despite disclaimers of going nuclear, Ukraine, in practice, was visibly moving to gain the weapons.⁴ While Ukraine's sense of threat is not unfounded, it exploited its potential nuclear status to extort political and economic guarantees as well as to deter Russia; thus confirming that proliferators use their weapons as much for bargaining as for deterrence or warfighting.

As compensation for removing the weapons Ukraine has demanded from Russia and NATO (and especially the United States) binding military, political, and economic guarantees.⁵ To defray the immense costs of denuclearization during a most acute economic crisis Ukrainian officials talked of financial compensation from the United States in billions of dollars. While precise figures are unavailable, they apparently were seeking between \$2-5 billion. They also sought financial compensation for the highly enriched uranium (HEU) that Ukraine would forego by dismantling, and which could bring desperately needed billions on the world market. In addition, they sought guarantees that Ukraine will remain free from any outside economic pressure. This mainly refers to Russia's easy ability to strangle Ukraine's oil supply by charging world prices for energy sent to Ukraine. Hitherto that energy was shipped below cost, as a subsidy to Kiev. Both states are acutely aware that Russia can bring Ukraine's economy to a halt by exploiting this control over Ukrainian energy supplies.⁶ By late 1993 Ukraine's energy debt and Russian cutoffs became a major cause of its catastrophic economic situation making Russia's potential threat all the more frightening. Continued Russian oil and gas subsidies are a second condition of denuclearization.

Lastly, Ukraine sought from the West, again mainly the United States, a guarantee of political integrity and sovereignty against any attack, conventional or nuclear, from Russia.⁷ Kiev wanted this guarantee to go beyond those offered in the NPT, where any attack by a nuclear state upon a nonnuclear one would be taken to the U.N.⁸ Kiev demanded that the United States, and presumably the Western Alliance, guarantee to take military action against any state attacking it, i.e. Russia, and that Russia guarantee its borders too. Nowhere was it stated what form this Western guarantee should take. That is, should the United States act alone or should it act with and through NATO? Should the guarantee remain strictly limited to conventional counterattacks or escalate to the nuclear level? Obviously these questions involve the most profound issues of allied and European security. But one of the most bedeviling aspects of this whole episode is Ukraine's ultimate inability to fashion a coherent security policy that could answer such questions. Indeed, Ukraine arguably sought the nuclear option because it cannot either afford economically or decide politically how to confront its various military-political-economic challenges by purely conventional military and political means. Nuclear weapons became a kind of magic talisman to ward off many devils. And, as we shall see Ukraine *appeared to renounce nuclear weapons* partly because it told itself that the United States had in some undefined way guaranteed Ukraine's borders and sovereignty and promised large sums.

A crucial problem with Ukrainian policy is that diverse spokesmen advocate different security guarantees that are or could be incompatible let alone unrealistic. There have been

requests for a written document stipulating that any threat of force against Ukraine by a nuclear state would be regarded as unacceptable by other nuclear states. Or, as the nationalist Rukh party's chairman Vyacheslav Chornovil stated, membership in NATO would be post-nuclear Ukraine's sole guarantee. Ex-Prime Minister Kuchma even asked for U.S. extended deterrence.⁹ Deputy Foreign Minister Tarasiuk called for a written document possessing the economic, territorial, and military guarantees listed above.¹⁰ But Ukrainian Deputy and defense expert Serhiy Holovatyy told a conference in Germany devoted to the Partnership for Peace Program that Ukraine opposed including any countries east of Germany in NATO. He even rejected the offer to consult with the North Atlantic Cooperation Council on threats to the states of Central and Eastern Europe because those situations could lead to Ukraine's separation from Western Europe and/or its neighbors in Central Europe, and even to renewed dependence on Russia.¹¹ He charged that Ukraine's security is determined by "certain Russian tendencies and political forces."¹²

While this is not necessarily official policy, it reflects the paralysis in Ukrainian political thinking because it leaves Ukraine with only one option: unilateral isolated opposition to Russia, but now without nuclear weapons or potential allies. This belief that Russian trends are, in the final instance, what determines trends in Ukraine, or any other post-Soviet state is common across the CIS. It also is one of the factors that makes for uncertainty and even paralysis in those states' policy because it concedes the initiative to Russia and throws the ball to the West's court, while the state in question shrinks from the hard job of devising and conducting a Russian policy.¹³

At the same time, leading Ukrainian officials like presidential advisor Anton Buteyko claim that the U.S. signature to the treaty makes it more likely that it will be respected.¹⁴ Or like Foreign Minister Zlenko, they claim they now have a multilateral guarantee from the nuclear powers.¹⁵ Yet examination of the accord's published portions and statements by U.S. Ambassador to Kiev William Miller and Defense Secretary Perry show that Kiev received much more tenuous guarantees than these statements would lead one to believe. Ambassador Miller observed that if any state either attacks Ukraine or makes territorial claims upon it the United States will appeal to the U.N. or similar international organizations as the NPT says.¹⁶ Similarly, Secretary Perry publicly denied that the United States made any guarantees to Ukraine.¹⁷ The text broadcast by Radio Ukraine World Service on January 15, 1994 confirms that U.S. obligations do not transcend those in the NPT.

Once Ukraine ratifies START I and signs the NPT, Russia and the United States will confirm to Kiev their obligations under the CSCE Final Act to respect the independence, sovereignty, and integrity of CSCE member states. They will also recognize that border changes may be carried out only through peaceful means and by mutual agreement. They will similarly confirm their obligation

to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and/or independence of any state. Additionally both states confirm that their weapons will not be used for other than defensive purposes, in accordance with the U.N. charter. Both states also assure Ukraine of their obligations under the CSCE Final Act to refrain from economic pressure directed at subjecting Ukraine to their own interests and advantage. Should a nuclear power attack Ukraine they "will confirm their obligations to demand immediate action on the part of the U.N. Security Council with the aim of giving assistance to Ukraine as a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty that does not possess nuclear weapons." If Ukraine becomes a victim of an act of aggression or is threatened by an aggression involving nuclear weapons, they "will confirm their obligations to Ukraine not to use nuclear weapons against it or any other nonnuclear signatory of the NPT unless they themselves, their allies, or their territory is attacked by Ukraine or any state allied to it having nuclear weapons."¹⁸

Though these conditions seem to guarantee Ukraine against economic, territorial, and military-political threats, in reality the CSCE and U.N. are of little avail against the combination of economic pressure and support for Russian separatism involving the Crimea or Eastern Ukraine that Russia could bring to bear. In addition, the trend is away from extended U.S. nuclear deterrence even as NATO's conventional forces are being decimated due to budget cuts. This guarantee also does not break the Russian military doctrine's threat to Ukraine in the event of admission to NATO, indeed it confirms Russia could use nuclear weapons against a Ukraine allied to NATO, even in a purely conventional war and even if Ukraine was not an active belligerent. That clause alone is intended to deter Ukraine from joining NATO in peacetime since it would automatically become a target for Russia. This is another instance of using nuclear weapons for political bargaining. Nor do U.S. leaders see themselves as committed in any way other than the NPT to protect Ukraine, though the Ukrainian government thinks that is the case. Nor does Bosnia's example comfort Ukraine, especially if, as seems to be the case, it continues to shrink from carrying out the economic reforms that it needs to survive. As Ambassador Miller and the treaty text indicate, the guarantees to the Ukraine are no better than those in the original NPT. Since Russia can block action in the Security Council and the CSCE, while bringing other pressures to bear, these guarantees remain somewhat hypothetical.

Sensing that, many members of the Rada have attacked the treaty and some have even said that Ukraine should not adhere to the NPT until it first receives financial compensation for denuclearization.¹⁹ That action would negate the treaty since the guarantees only come into effect after adherence to the NPT. But the raising of this point, along with charges that the government altered the text of the Rada resolution accepting START I to make it look like the earlier Rada vote to accept START with conditions that effectively gutted it was no longer valid since

the conditions had now been satisfied, indicates the depth of internal political struggle between legislature and executive in Ukraine.²⁰ Given those conditions and internal threats to Ukraine due to its mismanagement of reform and Russian unrest, it is doubtful that the Ukraine can either stabilize itself on the basis of this treaty, or put lasting credence in its guarantees. In other words, this treaty notwithstanding, the challenges facing all those interested in a strong and viable Ukraine are only now emerging in their full and daunting scale and complexity.

Equally noteworthy is the fact that Ukraine has now committed itself to denuclearize before it has proven able to devise an alternative security structure or program. That lack of viable doctrine means that Ukraine cannot easily integrate into the Partnership for Peace and dims the hope of future membership in NATO or the EU. Rather it remains dependent on the vague superpowers' guarantee. Rada member and Environment Minister Yuri Kostenko argued that Ukraine should not denuclearize until it is clear that any aggression against it would automatically threaten the interests of many other European states. Holding missiles until then lets Ukraine play a key role in every Pan-European process and gradually exchange its deterrent for another system of effective structures and guarantees.²¹

Any analysis of these conditions, even one acknowledging the reality of the Russian threat, must nonetheless conclude that Ukraine's conditions were not only unrealizable, they bordered on the fantastic. This reinforces our working hypothesis that these weapons are primarily instruments of political bargaining with dubious operational utility, even under the limited conditions where nuclear war might be warranted. Certainly there is no way Ukraine can receive a U.S. commitment for nuclear strikes on an attacker, even a strictly conventional one, when neither the United States nor NATO will give similar guarantees to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Nor is it likely that any such treaty clause could go through Congress unscathed. Ukraine cannot be secured by the superpowers' mutual suicide and the destruction of Western civilization. Nor can a rapidly demobilizing NATO adequately defend Ukraine against either nuclear or conventional attack though both scenarios are rather unlikely anytime soon given the condition of the Russian army.

Nor would Kostenko's scenario inspire Europe to welcome Ukraine; quite the opposite, since the weapons are targeted on the NATO allies and Ukraine is widely suspected of seeking positive control and retargeting capability over them. Certainly nobody in Europe would then trust Kiev. Indeed, loose talk in Ukrainian newspapers of a nuclear umbrella over Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Hungary does not allay such fears.²² Furthermore, any new nuclearization in Europe instantly reopens the nuclearization agenda that we have largely overcome. States will then request to redeploy tactical or strategic U.S. systems in Europe, create their own deterrents, and non-NATO states will

seek U.S. or Russian extended deterrence against Kiev.²³ One should be clear what this means today. As Stephen Cimbala points out, extended deterrence means that one is ready to wage "small wars" or threaten big ones to deter a nuclear power if need be.²⁴

By the same token it seems equally unimaginable that Ukraine can count on receiving billions from a Western world in the throes of a recession whose dimensions are the greatest since 1948, and at the same time demand that it be immunized from the need to reform its economy. The U.S. position had been that it would commit some \$330 million to Ukraine to denuclearize as specified in the Nunn-Lugar act, provided reforms take place. But the demand for immunization against economic pressure really translated into a demand for immunity against reform. The nomenklatura policies that have led Ukraine into hyperinflation and depression continue as the government's policies resemble those of the ill-starred Soviet Ryzhkov regime of 1988-91. The Ukrainian parliament elected in March 1994 is so divided among pro-Russians and Ukrainian nationalists on the one hand and between reformers and conservatives on the other that gridlock is to be expected there. In any case, until now the government has shown neither interest in nor aptitude for making reforms. And finally we are urging Russia to decontrol energy prices to bring them to the world level for its own sake. We cannot then tell Moscow to exempt Kiev from this demand. Thus Kiev's economic conditions are as unrealistic as its political-military ones. In the end the subsidies under this treaty will run out while Ukraine must keep to very strict denuclearization schedules to achieve them and immediately and comprehensively address its economic and military security problems.

Though the financial terms of the treaty, including sale of the HEU with the proceeds going to Ukraine, a year's debt forgiveness by Russia of Ukrainian energy debts, and compensation under Nunn-Lugar for the missiles do meet most if not all of Ukraine's demands, they extend over several years. Without reform the treaty's benefits will be squandered. Indeed Ukraine's prior economic conditions showed an unrealism and desire to escape from the real world of constant economic and political pressures into some never-never-land where Ukraine will have no problems and no need to take action since it will be guaranteed by foreign allies and immunized against any outside economic pressure. This line was, in fact, an abdication of responsibility and reality that unfortunately is not uncommon in Eastern Europe. Essentially Ukraine told the West that Russia per se is an ontological threat and upon its future course depends Ukraine's whole policy, a common regional perception.²⁵ In addition, without nuclear weapons Ukraine, on its own, cannot deal with the threat. Moreover it cannot take steps to strengthen itself domestically unless the West categorically defends its sovereignty, integrity, and economic system and guarantees it against the foreign economic pressure from policies that Russia must undertake for its own interests while pouring in money to an unreformed Ukraine. This demand, that the West rescue new states in this

region from having to deal with the genuine Russian threat, is not restricted to Kiev. But Ukraine's outlook, added to its political irresponsibility with nuclear weapons and internal political polarizations, is particularly unsettling.

Even more unsettling is a decision to maintain Chernobyl and other atomic energy stations as main power sources. That policy could lead to a second Chernobyl catastrophe at a time when Ukraine's ability to manage its weapons and presumably such stations is doubted in the West, Russia, and even in Ukraine itself. Equally, if not more, disquieting is the fact that analysts of Ukraine concede that there is little understanding in Kiev of the complexities of deterrence, second strike capability, and the necessary C³ architecture for nuclear systems.²⁶ Ukraine is literally playing with fire.

The sentiment for continued nuclearization and positive control over the weapons is not only directed to deter Russia. It is widely believed that without these weapons the United States and Europe would not take Ukraine seriously at all and, second, that these weapons give Ukraine a reassuring sense of its importance. As Overholt suggests, prestige plays a big role as a motivator here, i.e., the nuclear weapons have an equally important psychological function for Ukraine.²⁷ Admittedly the Bush administration probably did not take the ex-republics of the old USSR seriously enough or devote sufficient attention to Ukraine. But the Clinton administration has sought every avenue of negotiation with Ukraine and sent Secretary of State Christopher, Secretary of Defense Aspin, and then Ambassador Talbott to Kiev. Even President Clinton personally called President Kravchuk to warn him against keeping nuclear weapons and only a conditional acceptance of the Lisbon Protocol. Ukraine's unwillingness to give up the weapons as pledged before 1994 had created the suspicion that we are being held up or blackmailed. That feeling could easily have poisoned Ukraine's relationship with the United States rather than help it.²⁸ Paradoxically, the political bargain Ukraine seeks could easily have been undone precisely by its recalcitrance on the nuclear issue. With this background in mind we can proceed further to employ Overholt's categories to explain Ukraine's motives. In the case of the Russian threat to Ukraine we are dealing with a real and deeply felt political-military phenomenon and perception.

The Russian Threat to Ukraine.

Enough has been written on Russo-Ukrainian relations to underscore the gravity of the Russian threat. From the inception of the CIS, Russian leaders arrogated to Russia the leading role and they formed the CIS to retain as much as possible of a political union.²⁹ The CIS also was intended to preserve, as much as possible, a military union inherited from the Soviet armed forces and carry this unified military into the future under a new political leadership.³⁰ Since then Russian policy has ever

more overtly substituted itself for the CIS and reserves to itself the right to a Pax Russica or Monroe Doctrine throughout the former Soviet Union.³¹

Ukraine's refusal to play along, its formation of its own army, claims to the Black Sea Fleet and to nuclear weapons were thus major obstacles to the project to de-Sovietize the USSR but preserve a military-political union. There are also important figures who believe that the neighboring CIS and Baltic states can only be satellites of Russia or of NATO, a mode of thought derived from Lenin and Stalin, and that Ukraine objectively bars Russia from Eastern Europe. Indeed, one analyst openly proclaims the main task of Russian foreign policy in the future to be the creation of conditions for a "qualitative" change in the composition of Ukraine's ruling elite to include those who wish to cooperate with Russia before Ukraine's national identity is firmly consolidated.³² When one adds to this resentment and frustration Russians' deep-rooted belief that a Ukrainian state is something between a bad joke and the blackest treachery, the reasons for mutual suspicion grow.³³

During 1992-93, it became clear that Russia's Parliament sought to detach Crimea from Ukraine and annex it to Russia and that a growing nationalist movement inside Crimea sought the same objective. Russia's ambassador to Ukraine stated that if enough Russian speakers (i.e., not just ethnic Russians) wanted to join Russia, Russia would act to support them.³⁴ So added to the political doubts about Ukraine as a real state were fears of a territorial fifth column and attempt to revise the borders.

Indeed, careful examination of Russian security policy throughout the former USSR shows Russia increasingly combining or orchestrating all the economic, political, and military levers it possesses to have its way. In the local wars and crises on its periphery it has not hesitated to use or threaten direct military force to dismember insufficiently pro-Russian states as in Georgia, Azerbaidzhan, the Baltic states and Ukraine or to play the card of the Russian diaspora or of traditionally pro-Russian local minorities (as in Georgia).³⁵ In November 1993, Vice-Premier Shokhin asserted that the status of Russian minorities throughout the CIS would be present in "all economic talks with CIS countries," including Ukraine. He further elaborated that,

Moreover we shall negotiate the extension of credits solely with those states, which will first conclude with Russia agreements on migration with rigid obligations, including that on material compensation for migrants, and second, conclude an agreement on dual citizenship . . . We tie politics with economics . . . the same is true of the condition of the Russian speaking people (i.e., not just ethnic Russians-SJB) in the 'near abroad.' Whenever some benefits are requested from us, we are entitled to pose a question about the

balance of interests . . . I believe that with time we will all become accustomed to the thought that this does not amount to some imperial ambitions, but a normal negotiating process.³⁶

These remarks expressed the policy of the reform government that fell in December 1993 to a still more aggressively imperialist-minded coalition. The recent defeat of the Russian reformers, who were less truculent on the territorial issue, and the switch to the right in Russia only alarmed Ukraine even more. Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev has called Ukraine a mythical state. Russian diplomats have argued abroad that Ukraine will not be a state for long, attempted to isolate Ukraine from Poland in particular, and frustrated its policy of creating a Baltic-Black Sea bloc in Eastern Europe.³⁷ They also have worked to prevent Ukraine from joining any Western security system that Russia is not a part of. Russia thus seeks a veto over Ukraine's freely chosen entry into NATO or the European Union.³⁸

Although Russia previously guaranteed Ukraine's borders, it did so only in the context of the CIS, not bilaterally, adding to Ukraine's fears. It also has been claimed in the West that the only Ukraine Moscow would accept outside of the CIS would be denuclearized; stripped of Crimea, Eastern Ukraine and the Black Sea Fleet; and economically impoverished.³⁹ Indeed, a uniform Russian pattern of territorial and ethnic threats, and a restored economic union based on highly exploitative relationships with the periphery where Moscow controls energy sources and further progress in reforms seems to characterize overall Russian policy.⁴⁰ Unfortunately Ukraine's failure to reform makes it all too easy for Moscow to flash those trumps despite the treaty.

The most visible threat appears in Russia's overall security doctrine of May 1993 and defense doctrine of November 1993. Russian policy since 1993 clearly conforms to the objectives set forth in these documents. The consistency with which these policies have been pursued also strongly suggests a durable consensus throughout the government on foreign and defense policies.⁴¹ The security document asserts that Russia alone guarantees the security of the whole CIS.⁴² It implies a Brezhnev doctrine type approach to the security of those states and also a basis for a Russian version of the Monroe Doctrine. Since then Russia has argued for revising the CFE treaty to put more troops on its southern frontier, ostensibly for defense against ethnic wars in the Caucasus. But these forces could easily threaten Ukraine as well. It is also noteworthy that Ukraine too supports such revisions in order to redeploy its troops towards Russia. Russian officials also have campaigned for Western recognition of the right to station Russian troops abroad in so-called hot spots and enjoy a visibly hegemonical role in its neighborhood as guarantors of their neighbors' security. In addition, they often act as or speak as if the West has assented to such a role, something open to some doubt.⁴³

Of growing and particular significance are the sections in the 1992 draft and the 1993 doctrine that spell out Russia's self-proclaimed role of protector of Russian minorities abroad. From both documents it is clear that Russia's armed forces and government regard threats to their civil rights, real or imagined, as potential causes for military action.⁴⁴ Lately Russian leaders have pledged they would conduct a "tough" policy to defend those minorities' rights. At the CIS Ashgabat conference in December 1993, Russia unsuccessfully strove for special rights and agencies for Russians' dual citizenship abroad.⁴⁵

The danger facing a Ukraine with 11 million Russians is that any exacerbation of the fragile interethnic truce there could cause an armed conflict. The most crucial current point is the Crimea where on January 30, 1994, President Meshkov was overwhelmingly elected on a platform to return Crimea to military-political-economic union with Russia. Ukrainian nationalists like Chornovil urged Kiev to annul those election returns, an extremely provocative move.⁴⁶ Since then the conflict has only deepened in intensity as Crimea overtly strives for independence. If the Crimean situation cannot be resolved internally by peaceful political means, it could offer Russia an opportunity to validate the implicit threats in its doctrine and policy. Given Russia's present right-wing drift, its government would be hard-pressed not to support the Russians in Crimea if they seek union with Russia under the right to self-determination. After all, its ambassador is already on record saying that Moscow would so act.⁴⁷

The Crimean issue alone could become the most explosive one inside Ukraine because here the ethnic consequences of Kiev's gross economic mismanagement can make themselves most violently felt. There have already been attacks on nationalist Russians including newly-elected president Meshkov. Likewise, any effort at Russian self-assertion there could well lead the indigenous Crimean Tatar population into a much more intense, even violent, affirmation of its historic rights (and by those terms they are Crimea's rightful heirs) against Moscow and/or Kiev.⁴⁸

At the same time the impact of possible trouble in Crimea cuts both ways on the new treaty. Some, seeing Russia's threat to Ukraine's integrity, feel still more inclined to keep the nuclear weapons to deter any move by Russia or Russians in Crimea (and elsewhere in Ukraine) to organize for self-determination. This stance risks using the weapons as a political and military deterrent against a self-determination movement, an incongruity that is no less dangerous because such conflicts have a nasty habit of becoming protracted all-or-nothing affairs. An equally dangerous factor lies in the asymmetry of responses available to Ukraine which shows no interest in or knowledge of what to do to alleviate the socio-economic distress that provokes ethnic self-assertion. Lacking any viable or coherent reform policy other than a shrill effort to hold onto nuclear assets it does

not control, Ukraine, confronting a nationalist movement under such circumstances, would have little means of devising an effective response to it. On the other hand, supporters of the treaty see the Russo-U.S. guarantees of Ukraine's integrity and sovereignty as barriers to Russian support for a Crimean self-determination movement, and therefore support the treaty even though a literal reading of it in no way precludes the Crimeans from rising or Russia from bringing pressure on Ukraine to let them go.⁴⁹

Russia's 1993 defense doctrine, like its earlier very conservative draft of 1992, also makes explicit threats to Ukraine. Though it claims to guarantee Ukraine (and all other members of the CIS) it does so within the context of the CIS, not in Ukraine's own right. This clumsy effort to satisfy Kiev's demands for a guarantee was counterproductive. Ukraine will resist any effort to guarantee Ukraine only in the CIS context. A firm bilateral, or trilateral, guarantee that includes Washington and Moscow, like the new treaty, is its aim. The defense doctrine seems to offer a concession to Ukraine in that it renounces the use of nuclear weapons against any signatories of the NPT as in the original treaty of 1968. This should, it was argued, provide the guarantee Ukraine seeks. However, that guarantee was made in 1968 and Russia is already on record as adhering to this Soviet treaty, so its statement is nothing new. Moreover, Russia's defense doctrine clearly states that Russia will use nuclear weapons first against any attack, conventional or nuclear,⁵⁰ by a power owning nuclear weapons or allied to nuclear states.

This provision not only threatens Ukraine even if it acts only conventionally, it also is a naked attempt to use nuclear weapons to gain a veto over Ukraine's security policy and preserve its isolation in Europe by obstructing Ukraine's entry into NATO or any other bloc. We see here the use of nuclear weapons as political bargaining chips and Russia's continuing effort to diminish the sovereignty of its European neighbors. Since Russia must resort to nuclear threats in lieu of a robust conventional army, Ukraine lives under the threat of a power that does not accept its sovereignty or integrity and tries to extend deterrence to it against its will even as it threatens Ukraine with a nuclear first-strike. These threats are compelling reasons for Ukraine to go nuclear.

As Overholt suggests, public demand for nuclear weapons, either expressed directly in polls or other forms of direct expression, or through legislative representatives, could be a factor for proliferation. Ukraine presents an interesting case that corroborates his findings. If one looks at Ukraine's political map one finds that the Russians are concentrated to the East and South while Ukrainian nationalism is strongest in the West and North. Throughout this century in Ukraine ethnic and geographical stratification march hand-in-hand. As Ukraine's economic condition reaches levels of epic catastrophe, it is quite possible that it could come under mounting ethnic pressure

as well. Already a U.S. national intelligence estimate speculated that, in 2 years, fragmentation of Ukraine into clashing ethnic rivals is likely.⁵¹ The author's personal estimate is that the wolf is already at the door and unless drastic action is taken the crisis will be much sooner than that. However, any such drastic action will probably rebound against the industrial Russian sector and exacerbate the hitherto latent ethnic tensions.

Second, the continuing tension between Moscow and Kiev on a host of military and political issues like nuclear weapons has already led to a vociferous Ukrainian nationalism and growing support for an independent Ukrainian nuclear arsenal, complete with sophisticated military rationales for it.⁵² These rationales and support have clearly influenced the Rada which has forced Kravchuk to play a delaying and not altogether scrupulous game with it, Moscow, and Washington, regarding passage of the START I treaty. When the Rada passed that treaty in November 1993, it added so many conditions that the treaty was essentially negated. This action touched off a hail of attacks from NATO and Moscow, but it also showed the strength of public and elite support for nuclear weapons until and unless the security guarantees, financial considerations, and psychological recognition that the weapons' advocates demand are received. This nationalist clamor for security and for overt use of nuclear weapons as bargaining chips narrows the space within which Kravchuk would like to operate vis-a-vis Moscow and the Rada. This public and political support for nuclear weapons corresponds to Overholt's categories of public demands for leaders to do something in response to tension or to a crisis as well as for international and national prestige. But it also partakes of his factor of national morale building inasmuch as it conveys the image of a Ukraine ready to stand up to Moscow and Washington for its rights.⁵³

Overholt also lists pressure from the military-industrial complex as a motive. There are charges in the Ukrainian press that this is indeed the case and that military industries want nuclearization because it means more contracts for them and a diminished risk of loss of workers, jobs, and funding.⁵⁴ This possibility is distinctly plausible, but cannot be ascertained at a distance without direct confirmation. But what can be certified is that, notwithstanding the Chernobyl disaster, Ukraine, due to its lack of energy sources, has found it necessary to opt for an extensive and equally dangerous nuclear energy industry. Kiev knows that to consolidate its sovereignty and independence it must create its own energy base.⁵⁵ Non-Russian foreign suppliers, though important, cannot suffice. Therefore, advocates for the nuclear power industry also argue for an ongoing weapons industry. Whether or not this a rational ecological and military strategy (and it is seriously open to doubt given the quality of local reactors); it quite clearly shows the military-industrial complex's role in nuclear military programs and "rationally" responds to the threat of economic dependency upon Russia.

Ukraine's Motives for Signing the Treaty.

Yet finally in January 1994 Ukraine agreed with Moscow and Washington to dismantle its weapons, embark upon a complex process of denuclearization for which it will receive substantial American compensation, and rely on Russian guarantees. Therefore we must assess why Kiev decided to renounce nuclear weapons. There are few examples of states who renounced nuclear weapons to choose from, but Ukraine's decision to sign the treaty is not without foreign precedents. South Africa also renounced its program and submitted to the IAEA and the NPT for two fundamental reasons. First, the threat its leaders had perceived of a Soviet backed invasion combined with internal ethnic or racial unrest disappeared after settlement of the Namibia and Angola issues in 1988. Second, it recognized that suspicion of its nuclear ambitions due to its refusal to sign the NPT caused distrust of its policies and sincerity in reforms throughout Africa and the world.⁵⁶ Arguably South Africa's prior motives for going nuclear also resemble Ukraine's, namely the desire to frighten the United States into some sort of security guarantee to deter South Africa from going nuclear against internal or foreign enemies.⁵⁷ Similarly Ukraine's strategic situation is not unlike Pakistan's, another proliferator. As Brahma Chellaney and Stephen Cohen observed, "Pakistan, for example, belongs to that class of nations whose survival is debated, whose legitimacy is doubted, and whose conventional security apparatus may be inadequate to cope with the pressures of hostile neighbors."⁵⁸ Both South Africa and Pakistan (and Israel) have claimed to face not just "total onslaughts" or superior conventional enemies (and nuclear foes--India, China) but also internal racial or ethnic enemies. Thus their situation can easily be conceived to resemble Ukraine's. There clearly does exist a commonality (along with Israel) of using the nuclear weapons to deter superior or potentially superior conventional enemy forces.

By the same token the military argument that nuclear weapons would deter a conventionally and even nuclearly superior Russia also goes back to both Swedish and French arguments of a generation ago. Ukraine's potential arguments for using nuclear weapons to dissuade internal conflict supported from outside apparently derive from the French general and strategist, Andre Beaufre, whose influential *Introduction to Strategy* evidently also influenced South Africa.⁵⁹ Similarly the decision to give up the nuclear option may also be predicated on the awareness that ethnic conflicts cannot be deterred by nuclear weapons because the asymmetry of actual threat and deterrent are too great and the bomb ultimately would destroy what Ukraine is fighting to retain. Even nuclear states like China are apparently switching their IRBM's to a conventional role to make them more effective in limited (conventional) local wars.⁶⁰ The case for conventional deterrence, if any, in ethnic wars that are not conventional theater wars, is still more compelling.

Sweden's case is also instructive. After 1952, Swedish generals argued for a nuclear deterrent against a superior Russian force. Generals argued that a small non-NATO and nonnuclear state would be vulnerable to conventional attacks. Nor did they believe that nonproliferation would induce the enemy's restraint, either conventional or nuclear. Rather a nuclear Sweden would deter such a force. Furthermore nuclear weapons were cost effective and yielded considerable collateral tactical and operational benefits in a conventional scenario, i.e., forcing dispersion of enemy forces.⁶¹ It sufficed for Sweden, they argued, to obtain a sufficient arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons which would deter attacks while convincing everyone of Sweden's nonoffensive aims since it had foregone strategic weapons.⁶² This request triggered an emotional and protracted debate in Sweden. In 1959 Prime Minister Tage Erlander presented the Atomic Weapons' Committee report and stated,

In general an increase in defense strength within certain limits means increased security, since the price of victory for an aggressor is raised. But *security does not necessarily increase in some direct relationship to military forces . . .* Swedish foreign and defense policies can be said to be built on the assumption that an increase in military forces does not lead to greater security if it is carried out with such means that the risks of war are increased at the same time.⁶³

This report did not stop the debate which went on at least until 1968 when the Parliamentary Commission on Defense reported against nuclear weapons and determined that Sweden did not need them since it was "existentially" under the nuclear umbrella of the great powers though it was outside of any alliance system. Even without any formal guarantees it participated in and directly benefitted from the superpowers' extended deterrence. The Commission reported,

The Party considering an attack on Sweden with or without the use of nuclear weapons must in this case also expect that nuclear weapons may be used against his operations even though Sweden does not have such weapons . . . The conclusion is that Sweden by and large is under the nuclear umbrella approximately in the same way that countries in our vicinity are, regardless of which great power bloc or sphere of interest they belong to.⁶⁴

The reasons for Ukraine's signing the treaty go beyond this although they are comparable. The threat from Russia has not disappeared and could not even if no nuclear weapons existed. In the logic of things, small nations next to big ones with a tradition of empire are existentially nervous about their safety. But it obviously became clear to Ukraine that a nuclear system based on the existing weapons, if anything, reduced its security.

NATO ministers said it was unthinkable that a nuclear Ukraine could join NATO and obtain the guarantees accruing thereby. Nor would NATO members, including Washington, guarantee nuclear action or financial assistance to defend a nuclear Ukraine whose missiles were targeted against it.⁶⁵ Paradoxically, possession of nuclear weapons reduced effective extended deterrence since no assured second strike or conventional riposte would be forthcoming from abroad.

In addition, it became clear to Kravchuk that Ukraine could not hope to manage its weapons, or to gain control of them, that its economy was in ruins, and that it depended on Russia for energy. Furthermore, as he told the Rada on February 2-3, 1994, the weapons, being under Russian control, offered Russia another pretext for intervention. Any effort by Ukraine to operationalize control over them spelled Ukraine's doom.⁶⁶ When Rada members combined those factors with the threat of intervention through a Crimean scenario and balanced it against the guarantees of both Moscow and Washington in this agreement, the latter looked like a better deal to safeguard Ukrainian integrity. They too realized that atom bombs were of little use versus the Crimea.⁶⁷

Probably many also realized that any effort to achieve positive operational control of these systems, which was widely believed to be Kiev's policy, would only trigger instant retaliation by Moscow which nobody would effectively contest because Ukraine's nuclear program had isolated it abroad. Equally important is the fact that without an adequate command and control system or second strike capability, had Ukraine moved to gain control or gained control over the weapons, it would have created the ideal first-strike target for a Russia committed to just such an action by its defense doctrine.⁶⁸ And by offering its C² system as prime target it also increased the chances that this preemptive strike would quickly descend into a total war.⁶⁹ Another unspoken factor may be related to Ukraine's deficiencies in command and control. Soon after the treaty was signed, members of the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) of Ukraine who were guarding the weapons at Uzin indicated their desire to return to Russian service in the SRF. Since these men had only recently given loyalty oaths to Ukraine, it is clear that their loyalty to Kiev was much shakier than these oaths might have indicated. Since the signing of the treaty Ukraine has been busily making these troops reaffirm their loyalty oaths to Ukraine. While Russian media charges that this means Ukraine seeks to evade the treaty and its military is procrastinating, it also could denote Kiev's effort to extract every last ounce of guarantees from Russia before it relinquishes the weapons and signs the NPT.⁷⁰

Because states with defective controls over nuclear systems tend to have volatile civil-military relations in the first place, as does Ukraine where nationalism in the armed forces is a bitterly contested issue, reliance on ethnic Russians to control these weapons may well have been a recipe for disaster. Furthermore, assuming the Ukrainian leadership sensed this

dilemma they may have been aware that any effort on their part to gain positive controls over the weapons instantly could have precipitated the very intervention they feared, but it might have come from within their own armed forces. Or even if they had managed to weather that kind of crisis, they would know they faced a permanent threat of a preventive strike, and relied upon hair trigger C² systems like launch on warning, especially if they had no second strike capability. These considerations highlight the importance of C² features and structures among the new nuclear states.⁷¹

Another important factor leading the Rada to reverse itself and accept START I on February 3 was that the United States and Russia had moved to satisfy many of Ukraine's economic concerns about the disposition and dismantling of the weapons and their components. If it failed to sign this accord Ukraine would lose the sizable economic and political benefits that flowed from Washington's serious effort to engage Kiev and its concerns. Presumably the U.S. guarantee of Ukraine, and of Russia's affirmation of Ukraine's integrity in this context may have also led many to believe that Ukraine's security was thereby strengthened. Perhaps Ukraine, like Sweden, concluded that nuclearization derogated from security by heightening the risks of war rather than deterring aggression, and that even without formal guarantees Ukraine was existentially under the U.S. nuclear umbrella due to this treaty. Or in other words, Ukraine had reached the limit of using the weapons as a bargaining chip and it was time to cash in. However, as stated above, it is by no means certain that Kiev calculated correctly about Washington, or that it matters in the end, given the crises it faces, unlike Sweden's stability.

The 1994 treaty itself and adherence to the NPT will be voted on by the current Parliament that was elected in March 1994. Already there is some outcry from nationalists who believe that once again Kravchuk has sold out Ukraine to Russia or is seeking his own power over the Rada.⁷² Kravchuk evidently feared that the former Rada would not vote for the treaty and the NPT, although they did ratify the Lisbon protocol and START I. He therefore delayed proposing the treaty until after the elections.⁷³ But given the rivalry between the executive and the Rada that is rooted in Ukraine's politics, even a vote for the treaty and the flowing of its benefits to Kiev may not prevent a crisis from tearing Ukraine apart because the economic crisis is the prime accelerator of nationalist unrest and politicization. In other words, this treaty may close the door only on one chapter of Russo-Ukrainian relations in the new Europe and abolish the specter of a nuclear Ukraine. But the task of ensuring a stable sovereign Ukraine within its current borders is a long-term one that is not over. Those would take on this task face profoundly difficult challenges that can only be resolved over many years. Moreover this challenge has recently become even more complex with Kravchuk's announcement that he will not run for President in the June 1994 elections. In other words, the Rada elections in

March did not resolve Ukraine's politics and, as is clear from current developments, Ukraine is continuing to do exactly what is contraindicated to successfully exit from its economic crisis.⁷⁴

The Repercussions.

The entire chapter of proliferation and nonproliferation in Ukraine has numerous repercussions, first, for Ukraine and its role in European and the CIS' security; second, for issues of proliferation; and, third, for the issues relating to deterrence and the use of nuclear weapons for political bargaining. Notwithstanding U.S. claims to the contrary and the secret nature of some of the agreement's clauses, it seems clear that Washington has incurred or is now seen to have incurred a moral, if not concrete political-military obligation to Kiev. Undoubtedly Ukrainian leaders so believe and Russian journalists, like Vitaly Portnikov, also have pointed out that the accord equalizes the U.S.' and Russia's role as guarantors of regional security.⁷⁵ Any discussion must be conjectural; but if an obligation or the perception of one exists, it raises the most serious questions about U.S. policy in Europe.

The United States has just refused to make such guarantees with regard to all the former Soviet bloc states and instead demanded a Partnership for Peace program that carries no guarantees whatsoever and includes both Russia and Ukraine as Moscow demanded. All we are pledged to do is consult in the event of a crisis. Meanwhile Central Europe looks at the Western paralysis and discord over Bosnia and cannot take even that guarantee too seriously. The logic of this treaty would appear to be at odds with the spirit of disengagement from Central European security issues that seems to dominate our policy and that of our allies because Washington seemingly has formally guaranteed Ukraine's integrity, sovereignty, and independence and Russia's affirmation of those principles. Thus it is committed to involvement in the regional security agenda to a much greater degree than before. And because of the immense importance of Ukraine for Russia's destiny and security, the pursuit of a stable bilateral relationship between Kiev and Moscow is a vital U.S. interest. This is why Secretary Christopher reaffirmed our support for Ukrainian integrity when the Crimean government almost triggered another crisis in the spring of 1994.

However, there has been little public debate or awareness over what we might do or not do should a crisis break out in Ukraine, e.g., a Crimean secession movement. For example, the Crimean government called for a referendum on the region's future on March 27, 1994. Ukrainian officials annulled the referendum which was expected to be overwhelmingly in favor of unity with Russia. But Crimea has carried on its efforts to break free of Ukraine. In the current climate of tough pro-diaspora Russians' policies it is very difficult for Moscow to refrain from intervening. At the same time Tarasiuk made it clear that Russian

intervention in the Crimea will cause Ukraine to stop denuclearizing.⁷⁶

Are we then obliged to resist that movement which will likely claim the right to self-determination and provoke a tremendous struggle with and within Russia? One cannot say that this accord guarantees Ukraine against a self-determination movement from within its own territory. We and Kiev thereby would face a situation where an agreement guarantees Ukraine against a contingency which is most unlikely to occur while the real threat to Ukraine is not covered and is unanswerable from the United States. Alternatively are we prepared to draw the European line at the German border and consign Ukraine (and thus Poland) not only to Russian extended deterrence but also to inclusion in a Russian security zone? That policy would seem to nullify any security guarantees given to Ukraine, but what practical remedies are available to Washington in the event of a Ukrainian crisis? Ominously there has been little public discussion about these issues. After all, Russia has made clear its strong opposition to any system that includes Ukraine but not it. There are even Western analysts who argue that should Ukraine formally move to any real system other than the CIS, that this will lead Moscow to renew its claims on Crimea and Eastern Ukraine.⁷⁷

Nor have we drawn the moral for Kazakhstan, which in February 1994 likewise signed the NPT and renounced possession of the nuclear weapons it inherited in return for economic compensation and presumably political guarantees beyond the NPT treaty.⁷⁸ Kazakhstan too had played an ambivalent game in holding out for U.S. guarantees and compensation. There were plenty of Kazakh or other analysts, who, like their Ukrainian counterparts, argued for holding out to the last moment to deter threats from Russia or China and gain these compensations and assurances.⁷⁹ As ethnic tension starts to build there, a Crimean type scenario could develop and Russia will not walk away from its compatriots or Northern Kazakhstan without a fight. But what then will happen should Almaty try to invoke the NPT or any other accords, like the CSCE Final Act which it has signed? After all, one could argue that the CSCE's Final Act's clauses on the territorial integrity of the signatories has been irrevocably shattered by the decision to dismember Yugoslavia into several states in 1991-92. If that treaty or Final Act is effectively null and void (as would seem to be the case) or is superseded by the right of oppressed peoples to self-determination, Ukraine then is vulnerable, even without Russian pressure, to a Crimean or Northern Kazakhstani secessionist movement, and the conditions under which its integrity is guaranteed in the January 1994 treaty are also essentially nullified.

Numerous analysts, like Edward Luttwak, point out the decreasing efficacy and value of nuclear weapons for warfare in general and of U.S. nuclear guarantees in particular.⁸⁰ This school links proliferation to the existence of an ally who can extend deterrence, conventional or nuclear, to the would-be

proliferator. In today's multipolar world the old bipolar alliance system that constrained proliferation is, they contend, breaking down; consequently threatened states like Ukraine will find it increasingly tempting to go nuclear.⁸¹ Or they will seek to find their own defense to regional nuclear threats due to uncertainty concerning U.S. policy, a process that appears to be gathering steam in Japan because of North Korea's proliferation.⁸² In addition, the temptation, based on the precedents set by Pakistan, South Africa, and now Ukraine, to use nuclear weapons to deter or threaten internal insurgencies that would then receive foreign support could multiply, tying proliferation to the internal instability of governments and making nuclear systems hostage to Yugoslavian or Lebanese type wars.

Turning to Europe we must remember that should Ukraine fall apart the repercussions will spread all over Europe and intensify growing pressures in multinational polities for fragmentation and for further obstacles on the road to Central European, Eastern European, and general European integration. Or will Ukraine continue to claim neutrality even as it seeks to organize some sort of alternative security system in Central and Eastern Europe between a NATO that resists those states and a Russia all too eager to integrate them? We must remember that many Ukrainian figures advocated and attempted to devise a security system from the Baltic to the Black Sea or an alternative system involving Ukraine's neighbors, especially Poland and Hungary, only to see these efforts fail due to Russian opposition, Ukraine's neighbors' wariness of involvement in Kiev's quarrels with Moscow, and the lure of NATO.⁸³ Or can Ukraine even remain neutral in the face of Russian opposition and Western apathy?

Nor can we consider Ukraine in isolation. It is the crucial variable as to whether Russia regains an empire or remains just a very important large state. On Ukraine's future hinges the security of the whole CIS and the future of Russian democracy because empire and democracy in Russia (if not elsewhere) are antithetical. But what occurs if Ukraine continues to degenerate or merely stagnates? Could Russia refrain from intervening in so explosive and disintegrating situation on its border? After all we must remember that today, despite its own difficulties, Russia faces a situation that has traditionally been auspicious for its imperial prospects: strife-torn, ethnically polarized, and barely viable polities on its borders.

Russian elites, even liberals, often define Ukraine as an objective impediment to Russia's interests. The Institute for the USA and Canada (ISKAN) recently charged that Ukraine blocks Russia's road to Southeast Europe.⁸⁴ Or else Russian elites see its nuclear policy as purely a cunning drive to nuclearization with no fault of Russia's.⁸⁵ Apart from this they see any nuclearization of the post-Soviet states as threatening them with nuclear encirclement within the CIS or from without, given Iranian and Chinese missile developments.⁸⁶ Undoubtedly a nuclear

Ukraine would also necessarily lead Russia to crash programs of missile defense, probably going beyond mere theater missile defense (TMD), to encompass an entire system of air and space defense married to ground based installations. That would seriously strain, if not overturn the ABM provisions of the SALT I treaty and threaten overall strategic stability with the United States while ruining Russia's economy. Anti-SDI advocates on both sides of the cold war have repeatedly observed that any viable ABM system threatens the other side with a preemptive first strike since it could only respond with a second strike that the defenses could then counter.⁸⁷ Since Russia has indicated that if Ukraine goes nuclear it no longer abides by START I and II, in that case we would also return to a situation of intense vertical proliferation of thousands of warheads (including MIRVs) along with at least one side racing desperately to create a ABM system. A general strategic destabilization would occur along with intensified mutual pressures for preemptive first-strike capability vis-a-vis Kiev and Moscow.

Thus Russia has compelling and vital interests at stake in Ukraine's denuclearization. At the same time, it obviously also seeks to constrain Ukraine's autonomy in security policy and retain a nuclear monopoly in Central and Eastern Europe lest it find itself in a rivalry with a nuclear Ukraine for regional hegemony there. That is not an idle or purely speculative consideration. Some Ukrainians have already speculated in public on creating a Ukrainian centered system there apart from NATO or Russia, and on the virtues of a Ukrainian nuclear umbrella in Eastern Europe.⁸⁸ Thus we must devise solutions that preserve global and European strategic stability, deter Russian aggression against Ukraine, and safeguard regional balance and stability.

Similarly Ukraine's destiny is critical to Poland. A robust and healthy Ukraine is crucial to keeping a Russian threat away from Poland and Central Europe. But until now neither Poland nor Ukraine has been able to overcome their particular agendas and forge intimate cooperation going beyond good neighbor relations.⁸⁹ Hence Poland looks west and south to cooperation with EC, NATO, and its partners in the Vishegrad Four. If Holovatyy accurately reflects Ukrainian policy, Poland would be wrong in looking to Kiev for support against Russia. Indeed it would then be exposed to tremendous pressures from Russia⁹⁰

At the same time the belief in certain Western and Ukrainian quarters that while Parliament was now right to ratify the START I treaty, Ukraine should now withhold voting to join the NPT until the financial compensation comes across and its ownership of the weapons in question is legally recognized abroad, also reflects a high degree of unrealism.⁹¹ To confirm Ukraine as a nuclear state in advance of its joining the NPT and to pay it for so doing does not only open the way for others to practice this kind of nuclear blackmail. It also gives Ukraine a pretext for breaking its word and not joining the NPT or giving up its weapons over the next several years, especially if a crisis with

Russia should intervene. Since the Rada has accepted the START treaty but not the NPT, such a situation could come about, particularly since the vote on the NPT will be left to the new Rada elected on March 27. In other words, delaying the vote on the NPT which alone can effectuate the treaty, implicitly links it to the Crimean issue and opens up myriad possibilities for further blackmail and delay. Though proponents of such a course want to see the financial benefits of the new treaty before they definitively renounce a nuclear option, given the bureaucratic procedures involved on all sides, and the unwillingness of both Washington and Moscow to accept further Ukrainian equivocation, that is unlikely. But if these politicians have their way, they will further tarnish Ukraine's already dubious reputation abroad, and prolong both its economic and ethnic crises without achieving real security. Ukraine can no longer equivocate and indulge in what is called "opaque" proliferation.⁹² The treaty forces it out into the open as proliferator or nonproliferator.

All of this discussion suggests the complexities and numerous difficulties of the issues of local, regional, and European security that are involved in Ukraine's security agenda and that could be linked to or affected by its ultimate nuclearization or renunciation of that option. Obviously it is clear to the United States and the West that Ukraine needs great assistance over a long time to climb out of the depths to which it has fallen. Only recently has it become apparent to the Clinton administration that Russian policy declarations are menacing to all its neighbors and ultimately to Eurasian tranquility. Therefore Partnership for Peace is taking on a decidedly more anti-Russian hue, or so we are told.⁹³ But it hardly suffices to call 1994 the year of Ukraine as 1993 was the year of Russia. A much more serious engagement with both Ukraine and Russia is needed.

Indeed, if one examines the policy and professional analyses being published now it becomes clear that the task of engaging Russia and the other successor states who are deeply offended by our insistence on Russia first is one of monumental depth, longevity, and investment of both time and resources in both the private and public sectors.⁹⁴ To date our performance, apart from actual legislation, has been quite insufficient in both Russia and Central Europe.⁹⁵ The challenges facing us in Ukraine are no less daunting, extensive, and protracted. But from the examination here it also is clear that a truly viable and coherent U.S. policy for Ukraine must also fully engage our Russian policy and lead Washington into a truly comprehensive engagement with the complex, unresolved, and multiple problems of the other post-Communist states. Sadly there is only the slightest hint or sign that we grasp the true magnitude of what we have gotten into by virtue of this treaty with Kiev and Moscow.

Yet at the same time it is difficult to see what Ukraine itself will do with the money and recognition it has won. It is

unlikely the elections will bring about less polarization. Ukraine is ethnically and territorially divided between Russians in the East and South and nationalists in the North and West. Institutionally Ukraine's politics are driven by the rivalry of executive and legislative where Kravchuk steadily maneuvered to concentrate power in his hands alone. But he has used that power to reinstate a version of Soviet type economics not reform. And no alternative is in sight, no matter what unnamed officials in Washington claim about a renewed focus on economic reform in Kiev.⁹⁶ Absent real reform Ukraine's crises can only grow more acute, perhaps even before the end of this spring. Nuclear weapons and the treaties about them would then fast become prime instruments for blackmail and threat in a conflict.

By negotiating, imposing, and signing this treaty we have also indicated that we will not be content with playing a passive role in Russo-Ukrainian affairs. But the imminent crisis, whose solution can only involve a protracted social agony, ultimately makes us to some degree hostage to subsequent developments in Ukraine. While perhaps this is the unavoidable price of our policy to achieve the desirable aim of denuclearizing Ukraine, the American people or government probably do not fully understand either how much or how long they may have to pay for it. Although this treaty may have been the best of all available U.S. policies, it could still turn out to have been too little too late.

ENDNOTES

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