Nuclear weapons and Ukraine

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Prior to 1991, Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union and had Soviet nuclear weapons in its territory.

On December 1, 1991, Ukraine, the second most powerful republic in the Soviet Union (USSR), voted overwhelmingly for independence, which ended any realistic chance of the Soviet Union staying together even on a limited scale.[1] More than 90% of the electorate expressed their support for Ukraine's declaration of independence, and they elected the chairman of the parliament, Leonid Kravchuk as the first president of the country. At the meetings in Brest, Belarus on December 8, and in Alma Ata on December 21, the leaders of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine formally dissolved the Soviet Union and formed the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine held about one third of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, the third largest in the world at the time, as well as significant means of its design and production.[2] 130 UR-100N intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) with six warheads each, 46 RT-23 Molodets ICBMs with ten warheads apiece, as well as 33 heavy bombers, totaling approximately 1,700 warheads remained on Ukrainian territory.[3] While Ukraine had physical control of the weapons, it did not have operational control, as they were dependent on Russian-controlled electronic Permissive Action Links and the Russian command and control system. In 1994 Ukraine agreed to destroy the weapons, and to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).[4][5]

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Former military units

As a republic in the Soviet Union, Ukraine was the base for the following nuclear forces:

- 43rd Rocket Army
  - 19th Rocket Division (Rakovo, Khmelnytskyi Oblast) (see 7-я артиллерийская дивизия прорыва)
  - 37th Guards Rocket Division (Lutsk, Volyn Oblast)
  - 43rd Guards Rocket Division (Romny, Sumy Oblast)
  - 46th Rocket Division (Pervomaisk, Nikolayev Oblast)[6]
  - 50th Rocket Division (Bilikorovychi, Zhitomir Oblast)
Nuclear complex SS-20 Saber in Vinnytsia

Nuclear missile SS-18 Satan fully design and manufactured in Ukraine at Yuzhmash

Missile silo in the Central Ukraine for a SS-24 missile

Tupolev Tu-95 strategic bombers

**Budapest Memorandum**

International relations theorist John Mearsheimer predicted a Ukraine without any nuclear deterrent was likely to be subjected to aggression by Russia, but this was very much a minority view at the time.[7]

On December 5, 1994 the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Britain and the United States signed a memorandum to provide Ukraine with security assurances in connection with its accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state. The four parties signed the memorandum, containing a preamble and six paragraphs. The memorandum reads as follows:[8]

The United States of America, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,

Welcoming the accession of Ukraine to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as non-nuclear-weapon State,

Taking into account the commitment of Ukraine to eliminate all nuclear weapons from its territory within a specified period of time,

Noting the changes in the world-wide security situation, including the end of the Cold War, which have brought about conditions for deep reductions in nuclear forces.

Confirm the following:

1. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine.

2. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America reaffirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and that none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.
3. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, to refrain from economic coercion designed to subordinate to their own interest the exercise by Ukraine of the rights inherent in its sovereignty and thus to secure advantages of any kind.

4. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America reaffirm their commitment to seek immediate United Nations Security Council action to provide assistance to Ukraine, as a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, if Ukraine should become a victim of an act of aggression or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used.

5. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America reaffirm, in the case of Ukraine, their commitment not to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, except in the case of an attack on themselves, their territories or dependent territories, their armed forces, or their allies, by such a State in association or alliance with a nuclear-weapon State.

6. Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America will consult in the event a situation arises that raises a question concerning these commitments.

—— Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine’s Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons[8]

France and China's commitments

France and China also provided Ukraine with assurances similar to the Budapest Memorandum, but with some significant differences. For instance, France’s pledge does not contain the promises laid out in paragraphs 4 and 6 above, to refer any aggression to the UN Security Council, nor to consult in the event of a question regarding the commitments.[9]

China's pledge takes a different form entirely, dating from 4 December, and reading as follows:[10]

- The Chinese Government welcomes the decision of Ukraine to destroy all nuclear weapons on its territory, and commends the approval by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on 16 November of Ukraine’s accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State. China fully understands the desire of Ukraine for security assurance. The Chinese Government has always maintained that under no circumstances will China use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. This principled position also applies to Ukraine. The Chinese Government urges all other nuclear-weapon States to undertake the same commitment, so as to enhance the security of all non-nuclear-weapon States, including Ukraine.

- The Chinese Government has constantly opposed the practice of exerting political, economic or other pressure in international relations. It maintains that disputes and differences should be settled peacefully through consultations on an equal footing. Abiding by the spirit of the Sino-Ukrainian joint communiqué of 4 January 1992 on the establishment of diplomatic relations, the Sino-Ukrainian joint communiqué of 31 October 1992 and the Sino-Ukrainian joint statement of 6 September 1994, China recognizes and respects the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and stands ready to further develop friendly and cooperative Sino-Ukraine relations on the basis of the Five
Thus, China's pledge, similar to France's, does not pledge to involve UN or consultative mechanisms in case of crisis. However, it does pledge to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

### 2014 Crimean crisis

Despite Russia's claimed annexation of Crimea, the Government of Ukraine in 2014 reaffirmed its 1994 decision to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon state.[11]

After the Ukrainian Parliament voted to remove President Viktor Yanukovych from office, a power vacuum formed, and Russia annexed Crimea.[12] The Russian pretext used nationalist and cultural rhetoric, stating that the Russian military was protecting ethnic Russians from attack in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. Russia's military actions violated the Budapest Memorandum.[13]

Pavlo Rizanenko, a member of the Ukrainian parliament (Udar Party headed by Vitali Klitschko) told USA Today that Ukraine may have to arm themselves with their own nuclear weapons if the USA and other world leaders do not hold up their end of the agreement. He said "We gave up nuclear weapons because of this agreement. Now, there's a strong sentiment in Ukraine that we made a big mistake."[12] He also said that, "In the future, no matter how the situation is resolved in Crimea, we need a much stronger Ukraine. If you have nuclear weapons, people don't invade you."[14]

On 13 December 2014 Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko stated that he did not want Ukraine to become a nuclear power again.[15]

### See also

- Massandra Accords
- Vladimir Chelomey
- Mikhail Yangel
- Vladimir Utkin
- Stanislav Konyukhov
- Khartron
- Yuzhmash
- Yuzhnoye Design Office
- RD-8
- R-36M
- UR-100N
- Molodets
- Tsyklon
- Dnepr
- Mayak
- Zenit

### Reference list


6. Michael Holm, 46th Missile Division (http://www.ww2.dk/new/rvsn/46md.htm)


External links

- The Ukraine Crisis is Unsettling Decades-old Nuclear Weapons Agreements (http://www.nationaljournal.com/politics/the-ukraine-crisis-is-unsettling-decades-old-nuclear-weapons-agreements-20140312)
- Russia, Ukraine, and the Breakup of the Soviet Union (http://www.books.google.com/books?id=tLWeUoWEAGGc&pg=PA355&dq=recognize+Ukraine%27s+independence+Poland&hl=os&sa=X&ei=6KOVUBzLB4yW0QW12GYbw&ved=0CDQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=recognize%20Ukraine%27s%20independence%20Poland&f=false)


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