

Belarus: Missile Deactivation and Warhead Transfer

4/16/98: RUSSIAN DUMA COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS REJECTION OF WITHDRAWAL ACCORD

Citing the necessity to strengthen the union between Russia and Belarus and to "safeguard collective security under conditions of the eastward expansion of NATO," the Russian State Duma CIS Affairs Committee recommended rejection of the Russia-Belarus Intergovernmental Accord on Russian strategic troop withdrawal from Belarus on 16 April 1998. The recommendation was effectively moot, as the troops were withdrawn in June 1997 (see entry for 6/30/97 below).

[Decision of RF State Duma CIS Affairs Committee on draft legislation "O ratifikatsii Soglasheniya mezhdou Pravitelstvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Pravitelstvom Respubliki Belarus o poryadke vyvoda voinskikh formirovaniy Rossiyskoy Federatsii iz sostava Strategicheskikh sil, vremenno razmeshchennykh na territorii Respubliki Belarus, na territoriyu Rossiyskoy Federatsii," 16 April 1998.] {Entered 7/28/98 FW}

9/26/97: RUSSIAN DUMA DELAYS TROOP WITHDRAWAL RATIFICATION

The Russian State Duma postponed debate on a draft law on the ratification of the Russia-Belarus Intergovernmental Accord on Russian strategic troop withdrawal from Belarus. According to Russian Deputy Defense Minister Vladimir Toporov, Russia legalized the accord without Duma ratification in 1995 because Russia could no longer maintain Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) troops in Belarus.[1] The last troops were withdrawn in June 1997.[2] Duma CIS Affairs Committee Chairman Georgiy Tikhonov argued for delaying ratification since the accord had "grown obsolete in moral and political aspects" since its signing. Tikhonov based his opposition on the changed situation brought about by the new Russian-Belarusian Union Treaty and NATO's eastward expansion. Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev announced that the Duma protocol ratifying the agreement should clearly indicate that agreements should not be enacted before being ratified.[1]

[1] Robert Serebrennikov, ITAR-TASS, 26 September 1997; in "Duma Postpones Belarus Strategic Withdrawal Ratification," FBIS-UMA-97-269.

[2] "Russian Missile Troops Out of Belarus," *Jamestown Monitor*, 1 July 1997. {entered 3/13/98 djw}

6/30/97: LAST RUSSIAN STRATEGIC TROOPS LEAVE BELARUS

Russian President Boris Yeltsin's press spokesman Sergey Yastrzhembskiy stated that the last unit of Russian Strategic Rocket Forces has withdrawn from Belarus. Yeltsin had reportedly sent Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka a letter expressing gratitude "to the fraternal Belarusian people" for their hospitality toward the Russian troops.

["Russian Missile Troops Out of Belarus," *Jamestown Monitor*, 1 July 1997.] {entered 3/13/98 djw}

11/23-27/96: NUCLEAR WARHEADS, MISSILES, WITHDRAWN FROM BELARUS

On 23 November 1996 the last nuclear warheads were transferred from Belarus to Russia, and on 27 November 1996 the last of the SS-25 ICBMs were shipped to Russia.[1] The last act in the denuclearization of Belarus occurred with surprising speed. Less than two weeks after Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenka hinted that the withdrawal of the weapons would be delayed, the Russian Strategic Rocket Forces announced that all nuclear warheads had been removed.[2] The announcement led to some confusion, however, as while all the warheads were out, some missiles remained in Belarus.[3, 4] It appears that the SS-25 missiles were removed in two batches. According to Belarusian First Deputy Foreign Minister Valeryy Tsepkala, one group of eight SS-25s was shipped to Russia in mid-November, apparently during the week ending 22 November.[5] A second set of seven missiles was given a ceremonial send-off on 27 November at a railroad base near the Lida ICBM base.[6, 7] (This latter number is consistent with the number of missiles present at the Lida base. The number given for the first shipment is one less than the total number of missiles at the Mozyr base, but it is possible that one missile was either shipped separately, or that Tsepkala erred.) The departure ceremony was attended by Russian Defense Minister Igor Rodionov, Russian Strategic Rocket Forces Commander Igor Sergeev, and other military and political officials. Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenka did not attend, despite expectations that he would, because of political troubles in Minsk. Rodionov reaffirmed Russia's commitment to ensure the security of Belarus, in keeping with the terms of the CIS Collective Security Treaty (Tashkent Treaty), but did not extend any further security guarantees. [8]

[1] "Belarus Completes the Withdrawal of the Remaining Russian Missiles," Press Release, Embassy of the Republic of Belarus to the United States of America, 11/27/96.

[2] Interfax, 11/23/96, in "Last Russian Nuclear Warheads Removed From Belarus," FBIS-SOV-96-228.

[3] Moscow NTV, 11/24/96, in "Withdrawal of Missiles from Belarus `Still Continuing,'" FBIS-SOV-96-232.

[4] "Belarus gives up nukes, keeps missiles," WASHINGTON TIMES, 11/26/96, p. 11.

[5] Radio Riga, 11/22/96, in "Nuclear Weapons To Be Removed to Russia," FBIS-SOV-96-228.

[6] Valeriy Kovalev, "V Yevrope poyavilos' eshche odno bezyadernoye gosudarstvo," KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, 11/29/96, p. 1.

[7] Russian Public TV, 11/27/96, in "Rodionov Assures Belarus of Support Against Threats," FBIS-SOV-96-231.

[8] Aleksandr Zhilin, "'Topolya' uezhayut v Rossiyu," MOSKOVSKIYE NOVOSTI, no. 48, 12/1-8/96, p. 8.

{Entered JL 1/8/97}

11/13/96: LUKASHENKA CASTS DOUBT ON MISSILE TRANSFER

Once again confusing the issue of missile withdrawal, Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenka indicated in a speech to the Russian State Duma that he might link the withdrawal of the remaining missiles to a NATO pledge

not to deploy nuclear weapons in any new NATO member states. Lukashenka was not very clear on the point, however, stating that: "...Westerners try to persuade me that nuclear weapons ought long since to have been removed from Belarus, and the sooner the better. I ask: Why are you in a hurry? Why should we do this? And certain Russian servicemen tell me that today nuclear weapons in Belarus are harmful because the flight time [to them from NATO countries] is very short. Then I ask: But why do the NATO commanders not think in these terms? Why are they moving nuclear weapons up and are prepared to site them nearby? It doesn't add up, somehow, there is no logic..." Lukashenka went on to add that "[Belarus and Russia] must together seek an appropriate response [to NATO expansion], as the saying goes. Lest the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Belarus' territory coincides with the siting of nuclear missiles and munitions on the territory of the new NATO members." According to RIA-Novosti, Lukashenka's comments on the linkage of withdrawal to NATO expansion were echoed by Aleksandr Shokhin, First Deputy Speaker of the Duma, and a member of the Russia is Our Home faction. Shokhin agreed that there was no need for haste in withdrawing the missiles, and stated that the withdrawal must be "synchronized with NATO's extension to the east." Interfax cited Lukashenka as stating that there were "slightly over a dozen" missiles still in Belarus and that Belarus "might demand from the West guarantees that it would not locate nuclear weapons near Belarusian borders." After a meeting between President Yeltsin's chief of staff, Anatoliy Chubays, and Lukashenka, an aide for Chubays told Interfax that Chubays had stressed the need to implement the Russian-Belarusian agreement on missile withdrawal. ["Alyaksandr Lukashenka: You Cannot Build Happiness on the Betrayal of Your Brothers," SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA, 11/14/96, pp. 1-2, in "Lukashenka Addresses Russian State Duma," FBIS-SOV-96-221; Anna Kozyreva, "Byelorussian President Addresses the Russian Parliament," RIA-Novosti, 11/13/96; INTERFAX, 11/13/96, in "Lukashenka: 'Slightly Over a Dozen' Nuclear weapons Yet To Be Removed," FBIS-SOV-96-220; INTERFAX, 11/13/96, in "Chubays, Belarusian President Support Further Integration," FBIS-SOV-96-221.] {Entered 11/19/96 JL}

11/1/96: BELARUSIAN GOVERNMENT AGAIN CONFIRMS MISSILE WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE

On 1 November 1996 the Belarusian government issued an official statement reiterating its position that, "the remaining 18 SS-25 ICBMs will have been withdrawn by the end of the current year." The statement was prompted by a Council of Europe resolution expressing concern over the status of the withdrawal process. ["Belarus Honors its Non-Nuclear Commitment," Press Release, Embassy of the Republic of Belarus to the United States of America, 11/1/1996; Interfax, 10/31/96, in "Belarus to Hand Over Strategic Nuclear Missiles as Planned," FBIS-SOV-96-213.] {Entered 11/9/96 JL}

10/22/96: BELARUSIAN DEFENSE MINISTER ON MILITARY BASES, WITHDRAWAL

In an interview with a Belapan correspondent, Belarusian Defense Minister Leonid Maltsaw (Leonid Maltsev) stated that he was "categorically opposed to any talk of Belarus failing to fulfill its side of the Russian-Belarusian agreement on the withdrawal of the remaining Russian strategic troops." Maltsaw confirmed that the troops and SS-25 missiles were to leave Belarus by the end of 1996. Maltsaw did note, however, that there were still problems concerning the disposition of the former missile bases, and social guarantees for servicemen. He expressed his hope that these problems would be solved before the bilateral agreement expires.

[Belapan, 10/22/96, "Belarus: Defense Minister Denies breach of Troop Withdrawal Accord," FBIS-SOV-96-206.] {Entered 11/3/96 JL}

9/13/96: LEBED VISITS BELARUS, CONFIRMS MISSILE WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE

During a brief visit to Belarus, the Secretary of the Russian Security Council, Aleksandr Lebed, met with Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenka and the Secretary of State of the Belarusian Security Council, Viktor Sheyman. Commenting on Lebed's meeting with Sheyman, Lebed's spokesman told Belapan that, "the parties agreed that there would be no obstacles which could hamper the normal implementation of the agreement [to withdraw the missiles in 1996]." In an interview with ITAR-TASS, Lebed confirmed that he had discussed the issue with Lukashenka and that they agreed that the SS-25 ICBMs would be withdrawn by the end of 1996. [Belapan, 9/16/96, in "Belarus: Withdrawal of Strategic Missile Forces Discussed With Lebed," FBIS-SOV-96-181; ITAR-TASS, 9/17/96, in "Russia: Lebed, Lukashenka Discuss Withdrawal of Missiles," FBIS-SOV-96-182.] {Entered 04/18/97 JL}

9/7/96: LEBED, LUKASHENKA, RODIONOV DISCUSS MISSILE WITHDRAWAL

During a whirlwind weekend visit to Moscow, Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenka met with the Secretary of the Russian Security Council, Aleksandr Lebed, and the Russian Defense Minister, Igor Rodionov, to discuss the withdrawal of the SS-25 ICBMs from Belarus. According to an ITAR-TASS report, based on Security Council sources, the two sides concluded that "the issue requires further work." A report in the newspaper Segodnya, however, suggested that Lukashenka had not actually visited Moscow, but had simply invented the story in order to bolster his position in Belarus.

[ITAR-TASS, 9/9/96, in "Russia: Lebed, Lukashenka, Discuss Withdrawal of Rocket Units," FBIS-SOV-96-176; Leonid Velekhov, "Alyaksandr Lukashenka Visited Moscow Incognito. No Eyewitnesses of the Mysterious Visit Could Be Found," SEGODNYA, 9/10/96, p. 1, in "Belarus: Reasons for Lukashenka's Snap Visit to Moscow Assessed," FBIS-SOV-96-176; OMRI DAILY DIGEST, Part 2, 9/10/96.] {Entered 11/3/96 JL}

7/3/96: LUKASHENKA AIDE CONFIRMS WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE, DEMANDS COMPENSATION

In a press conference held on July 3, 1996, Presidential aide Sergey Posokhov (Syarhet Posakhaw) confirmed that the transfer of SS-25s to Russia had been suspended, but also stated that no missiles would remain in

Belarus by the end of 1996. Posokhov stated that Russia should compensate Belarus for the fissile material contained in the nuclear warheads. A week earlier, in an interview published in *Vo Slavu Rodiny*, the Belarusian military newspaper, Posokhov had observed, "This [keeping the missiles] is another example of bluffing. Those missiles are not part of the combat readiness system, and their practical use is out of the question. The only reason why they are still on our territory is that the Russian side must pay us for them. As good school students, we have made good on all of our nuclear commitments, emerging in fact as losers. On the other hand, Ukraine, which violated such obligations, is reaping profits from this." Posokhov was apparently referring to Ukraine's delay in ratifying the START I treaty, which eventually resulted in the Trilateral Statement that provided compensation to Ukraine for the fissile materials withdrawn to Russia. [Interfax-zapad, 7/3/96; "We Are Concerned About NATO's Eastward Expansion," *Vo slavu Rodiny*, 6/28/96, p. 1, in "Belarus: Lukashenka Aide on NATO Expansion," FBIS-SOV-96-128.] {Entered 11/3/96 JL}

6/27/96: BELARUSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CONFIRMS MISSILE TRANSFER BY END OF 1996

Speaking at a press conference, the Belarusian Foreign Minister, Uladzimir Syanko (Vladimir Senko), stated that in agreement with the bilateral Belarusian-Russian agreement, the last SS-25 missile would leave Belarus by the end of 1996.

[Interfax, 6/27/96.] {Entered 11/2/96 JL}

6/18/96: BELARUS HINTS AT DELAYING WITHDRAWAL TO END OF 1997

In an interview with the Belarusian paper *Svaboda*, First Deputy Foreign Minister Valeryy Tsepkala tied the removal of the SS-25s ICBMs from Belarus to the issues of NATO expansion and the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ). Responding to an interviewer's query concerning Russia's interest in the rapid withdrawal of the missiles, Tsepkala replied, "The former Belarusian Supreme Soviet chairman [Stanislau Shushkevich] and prime minister said that the missiles should be withdrawn by the end of 1996. However, the realistic written schedule envisions that they will be withdrawn by the end of 1997." Tsepkala also said the Belarusian Foreign Minister had not received any diplomatic note from Russia concerning the withdrawal of the missiles. A Belapan report on Tsepkala's interview noted that this was the first mention of the end of 1997 as the completion date for the withdrawal, and indicated that it did not correspond with any known agreements or schedules. An official of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry told Belapan that, "On the whole the schedule is being observed," but did not indicate which schedule he meant.

["After We Remove Missiles Out of the Country Today, We Will Never Bring Them Back," *SVABODA*, 6/18/96, p. 2, in "Belarus: Tsepkala's Comments on Missile Withdrawal," FBIS-SOV-96-120; "Belarus Officials Cited on Deadlines for Nuclear Weapons Withdrawal," *BELAPAN*, 6/19/96, in FBIS-SOV-96-119.] {Entered 11/2/96 JL}

6/13/96: DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS NO DELAY IN MISSILE TRANSFER

The Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus, Mikhail Khvostov, stated that there were no reasons for delaying compliance with the agreement on missile withdrawal and that all missiles would be transferred to Russia by the end of 1996, in accordance with the established schedule.

["Belarus: Minister Says No Disruption in Nuclear Withdrawal Program," *INTERFAX*, 6/13/96, in FBIS-SOV-96-116, 6/13/96.] {Entered 11/2/96 JL}

6/7/96: BELARUSIAN SUPREME SOVIET RATIFIES AGREEMENT ON SRF IN BELARUS

The Belarusian parliament ratified an agreement with Russia on unspecified issues related to the stationing of Russian strategic forces on Belarusian territory. Russia reportedly handed over to Belarus 150 temporary barracks which are environmentally clean and radiation free.

[Ustina Markus, "More Nuclear Disarmament Funds Promised For Belarus," *OMRI DAILY DIGEST*, 6/10/96.]

6/4/96: BELARUSIAN DEFENSE MINISTER ON MISSILE TRANSFER

In an interview with Interfax published on June 4, 1996, Defense Minister Leonid Maltsev (Maltsaw) disputed the Russian military's claim that the timetable for warhead and missile transfer from Belarus had been disrupted. Maltsev stated that the missiles would be transferred to Russia by the end of December, 1996, in keeping with the accepted schedule.

["More Senior Officials Signal Differences With Lukashenko," *THE MONITOR*, 6/5/96; "Belarus Says Nuclear Arms Withdrawal Schedule To Be Observed," *Interfax*, 6/4/96, in FBIS-TAC-96-008, 6/4/96.] {Revised 11/2/96 JL}

6/4/96: RUSSIAN SRF ON DELAYS, TIMETABLE FOR WITHDRAWAL

The Chief of Staff of Russia's Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF), Colonel General Viktor Yesin, stated that Belarus was disrupting the timetable for the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Belarus. According to Yesin, a document signed in December 1995 by the Russian and Belarusian defense ministers specified that all nuclear warheads would be transferred to Russia by May 1996, and all strategic forces (including missiles) would be transferred by August 31, 1996.

["Official Says Belarus Has Disrupted Nuclear Withdrawal," *INTERFAX*, 6/5/96, in FBIS-TAC-96-008, 6/5/96; "Belarus Criticized By Moscow On Missiles," *THE MONITOR*, 6/4/96; *INTERFAX*, 6/4/96, in "Belarus: Minsk Reaffirms Nuclear Arms Withdrawal Schedule," FBIS-SOV-96-108, 6/4/96.] {Revised 11/2/96, JL}

4/20/96: YELTSIN ON WARHEAD REMOVAL TIMETABLE

At the G-7 nuclear safety summit in Moscow, Russian President Boris Yeltsin pledged that all nuclear warheads in Ukraine and Belarus would be transferred to Russia by 12/96.

[Scott Parrish, "Yeltsin To Request Relocation Of Western Nukes," OMRI DAILY DIGEST, 4/11/96.]

4/11/96: BELARUSIAN DEFENSE MINISTER ON SS-25s

Belarusian Defense Minister Leonid Maltsev (Maltsev) was quoted as saying that he did not believe it would be necessary to suspend the withdrawal of the 18 SS-25s on Belarusian territory.

["Presidential Bulletin," INTERFAX, 4/11/96 in FBIS-SOV-96-072, "Belarus: Defense Minister Discusses Russian Missiles, Army's Future," 4/11/96.]

1/14/96: SRF COMMANDER ON DENUCLEARIZATION TIMETABLE

According to the Commander in Chief of the Russian Strategic Rocket forces, Colonel General Igor Sergeyev, all nuclear warheads will be removed from Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan by 9/96. Military units controlling missiles in Belarus are to be withdrawn by 9/1/96. Other sources report that Sergeyev announced that the warheads would be withdrawn in the first half of the year. However, during the week of 1/8/96 Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko stated that he did not recognize Belarus' 1993 pledge to become a non-nuclear state. He indicated that Belarus may not send the remaining 18 SS-25s to Russia. He reportedly said that he hopes to use the missiles as a bargaining chip to secure CTR funds.

["Russia Says Republics To Give Up Nukes," UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 1/14/96; INTELNEWS, 1/16/96.]

12/28/95: STATUS REPORT ON MISSILE TRANSFERS, BASE CLOSINGS

The Lida, Mozyr, Bykhov, and Kletsk Bases, which all house strategic missile forces, are in the process of being closed. SS-25s are currently located at the Lida and Mozyr bases. The Postavy Base and the Ruzhany settlement, which both housed strategic missile forces, are currently closed. The airforce testing ground "Dubno" and the Bobruisk 22nd Russian airforce division are also closed.

[CISNP Communications with Belarusian expert, 12/28/95.]

12/9/95: DELAYS IN BELARUS MISSILE TRANSFER

The missile withdrawal timetable was set back a few months when the Russian and Belarusian Defense Ministers met in Minsk and signed a new schedule for the withdrawal of the remaining two regiments of the Russian Strategic Rocket Forces from Belarus. The agreement called for the withdrawal of nuclear warheads from Belarus by 5/96 and the withdrawal of all strategic rocket forces from Belarus to Russia by 8/31/96. Some analysts feel that Belarus has been a "testing ground" for Russia. Belarus' attempts to manipulate arms control obligations in response to NATO enlargement can be seen as an extension of Russian policy.

[CISNP Communications with Belarusian expert, 12/28/95; INTERFAX, 6/5/96, in "Belarus: Official Says Belarus Has Disrupted Nuclear Withdrawal," FBIS-SOV-96-110, 6/5/96.]

11/1/95: REPORT ON SRF TROOPS WITHDRAWN FROM BELARUS

Security Council deputy Yuriy Sivakov said that the 18 missiles remaining in Lida and Mozyr would be withdrawn by the end of 1995, but that the process was being hindered by a lack of funding and effective MPC&A measures. The Belarusian Security Council will issue permits for the departing Russian troops only when it has been confirmed that the bases have been left in good order. Troops have already left Orsha and Postavy, but there are still troops left in Bobruisk.

[CISNP Discussions with Yuriy Sivakov, 10/95.]

10/6/95: FOREIGN MINISTER ON RUSSIAN WITHDRAWAL

Foreign Minister Uladzimir Syanko stated that the withdrawal of Russian nuclear forces from the territory of Belarus is being implemented according to the Belarusian-Russian Agreement, which states that nuclear weapons will be withdrawn from Belarusian territory by the end of 1996. The Belarusian side has hindered the withdrawal so that Russia "would abide by the terms for the troops withdrawal."

[MOSCOW MAYAK RADIO NEWS, 10/6/95; in "Foreign Minister on Integration, Nuclear Withdrawal," FBIS-SOV-95-194, 10/6/95.]

9/27/95: RUSSIA WAITING FOR RESUMPTION OF WARHEAD SHIPMENTS

According to Vladimir Verkhovtsev, a representative of the Russian Armed Forces General Staff, the shipping of nuclear warheads from Belarus to the Russian Federation will soon be continued. Verkhovtsev says that Russia has the technical equipment necessary for their transportation and is waiting for a political decision from Belarus.

["Yadernoe oruzhie iz Belorussii vyvezut prinyatiya politicheskogo resheniya," SEGODNYA, 9/27/95, p. 1.]

8/5/95: BELARUSIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY DENIES HALT IN MISSILE TRANSFER

According to a Belarusian Foreign Ministry spokesman, the withdrawal of the remaining 18 SS-25 strategic nuclear missiles was never halted. However, a slower transfer is in order because Russia has not met the withdrawal agreement, which calls for, among other things, providing for the elimination of environmental hazards. Russian troops have been leaving the Belarusian bases in an ecologically unacceptable condition. Andrei Sannikov, the Deputy Foreign Minister, said the 1996 deadline agreed upon by Russia and Belarus for withdrawal of all 18 missiles may be extended. The formal deadline for complete withdrawal according to the Lisbon protocol is 2001. Failure to remove the warheads would place Belarus in violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

["Handover of Nuclear Missiles to Russia Never Halted," INTERFAX, 8/5/95; Yuriy Drakakhurst, "Conflict by Consent," BELARUSSKAYA DELOVAYA GAZETA, 8/3/95; Yuriy Drakakhurst, "Game of Preference at a Testing

Range," BELARUSSKAYA DELOVAYA GAZETA, 8/17/95, p. 1; Ustina Markus, "Belarusian Disarmament Update," OMRI DAILY REPORT, vol. 1, no. 152, p. 5; Umit Enginsoy, "Belarus Holds Russian Nukes," DEFENSE NEWS, 8/21/95, pp. 1, 28.]

7/24/95: LUKASHENKA ON MISSILE TRANSFER HALT

When explaining the government's decision to curtail the withdrawal of nuclear weapons, President Lukashenka was reported to have said, "The Belarusian leadership cannot do charity at the cost of the interests of the Belarusian people." Belarus would not carry the burden of the arms race. He also said that the cost of delivering strategic armaments to Russia was nearly \$400 million, which is nearly equal to the Belarusian debt for energy supplies. Russia thus far has not provided "a single kopeck" of compensation for the strategic weapons. ["Lukashenka on Suspending Withdrawal of Nuclear Weapons," INTERFAX, 7/24/95.]

7/6/95: LUKASHENKA ORDERS HALT TO SS-25 MISSILE TRANSFER

On the orders of President Alexander Lukashenka, the Belarusian military has halted the withdrawal of SS-25 ICBMs and associated warheads to Russia. These orders prevent Russian trains from entering the country to remove the remaining launchers. In 2/95, most border controls had been removed when Lukashenka signed an agreement with Russian President Yeltsin, establishing a customs union between the two states. The remaining 18 ICBMs were scheduled to have been withdrawn by the end of 7/95. An article in IZVESTIYA reported that Lukashenka issued the order since he felt the decision to withdraw the weapons was a "political mistake" made by the previous leadership. He also reportedly stated that as Belarus is likely to unite with Russia anyway, it did not make sense to mindlessly ship military equipment to and fro. The article also insinuated there were financial considerations behind Lukashenka's decision. A senior Belarusian official reportedly said that the reason for the suspension of weapon withdrawal was that the Russian military left behind severely environmentally damaged sites. However, both the Belarusian official and Colonel General Igor Sergeyev, Russian Commander-in-Chief of the Strategic Rocket Forces, said that they expected all strategic forces to be withdrawn from Belarus by the end of 1995. In February, Lukashenka halted reductions in conventional military equipment, which Belarus is obliged to liquidate under the CFE Treaty.

[Viktor Litovkin, "President Lukashenka Has Suspended The Withdrawal Of The Russian Strategic Forces From Belarus," IZVESTIYA, 7/6/95, pp. 1-2; Aleksandr Korzhun, Igor Porshnev, Yevgeniy Terekhov, "Diplomatic Panorama," INTERFAX (Moscow), 7/10/95; in FBIS-SOV-95-132, "Official On Withdrawal Of Russian Strategic Units," 7/10/95; "Belarus Suspends CFE-Required Weapons Reductions," ARMS CONTROL TODAY, 4/95, p. 19; "Belarus Suspends START-1 Withdrawals," NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION NEWS, 8/7/95, p. 6.]

11/94: BELARUS MILITARY REPORTEDLY OPPOSES MISSILE TRANSFER

It was reported that the Belarusian top military command has been complaining that Belarus relinquished its nuclear weapons too easily. According to the reports, there are individuals who feel that Belarus received less compensation for its weapons than if it had held out longer.

["Non-Nuclear Thorns In The Way Of Non-Nuclear Status," NEWS FROM UKRAINE, No. 39-40, 11/94, p. 3.]

5/26/95: SRF CHIEF OF STAFF YESIN ON CONTROL OF SS-25S

According to the Chief of Staff of Russia's Strategic Rocket Forces Colonel General Viktor Yesin, Russia maintains control over 18 SS-25 ICBMs on Belarusian territory. The warheads from these missiles will be withdrawn to Russia by the end of 1995. 63 SS-25 ICBMs have been already been withdrawn to Russia.

[Doug Clarke, "Missile Chief Updates Weapons In Near Abroad," OMRI DAILY DIGEST, 5/29/95; Viktor Litovkin, "President Lukashenka Has Suspended The Withdrawal Of The Russian Strategic Forces From Belarus," IZVESTIYA, 7/6/95, pp. 1-2.]

4/95: BELARUS WARHEAD TRANSFER PROGRESS

45 strategic warheads have been removed from SS-25 ICBM missiles and withdrawn to Russia. The remaining 36 SS-25s were scheduled to be withdrawn to Russia by the middle of 6/95. [Another source states that the remaining SS-25s would be withdrawn by 7/25/95.] 18 of them are located near the city of Lida, and another 18 in Mozyr. One military official noted that while the withdrawal of the missiles and warheads would be complete by mid-1995, the rest of the missile division equipment would not be withdrawn until the end of the year.

["News Briefs: Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine START I cuts," ARMS CONTROL TODAY, 4/95; YADERNYY KONTROL', 4/95, p. 7, Information Section; "Belarus Topols To Go," FLIGHT INTERNATIONAL, 4/26/95, p. 16; and Doug Clark, OMRI DAILY DIGEST, No. 54, Part II, 3/16/95.]

9/94: CIA REPORT ON SS-25 TRANSFER PROGRESS

According to an unclassified CIA report, a total of 45 SS-25 ICBMs have been withdrawn from Belarus to Russia. This leaves Belarus with 36 SS-25s. Prior to 1993 there were 81 SS-25s on Belarusian territory.

["Nuclear Weapons Deactivations Continue In FSU," ARMS CONTROL TODAY, 11/94, p. 33.]

5/18/94: SS-25S TRANSFERRED TO RUSSIA

According to the Ministry of Defense, Belarus shipped its first trainload of SS-25 missiles from a station near the city of Slutsk to Russia for redeployment. Up to 36 missiles are scheduled to be withdrawn to Russia by the end of 1994. All remaining SS-25s are scheduled to be withdrawn by the end of 1995. Earlier press accounts quote the Ministry of Defense as saying that 27 SS-25s were redeployed to Russia by the end of 12/93.

[PPNN, Second Quarter 1994, p. 16; "Belarus Ships First Strategic Missiles to Russia," Reuter, 5/20/94,; and

ITAR-TASS (Moscow), 5/18/94; in "Russia Withdraws Strategic Units From Belarus," FBIS-SOV-94-096, 5/18/94, p. 8.]

(The discrepancy can perhaps be accounted for as follows: The 27 SS-25s redeployed to Russia in 1993 may have been the same 27 which were deployed to Belarus by Russia subsequent to 1990. This latest shipment may have been the first of the 54 SS-25s which were on Belarusian territory at the time of the 9/90 START I MOU.)

3/94: TIMETABLE FOR TRANSFER OF MISSILES TO RUSSIA

The Russian Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) are being removed from Belarus. The SRF consisted of two divisions stationed in Mozyr and Lida (eight rocket regiments), which were equipped with the SS-25 (RS-12) Topol mobile ICBM. The first regiment of 9 missiles, based in Postavy, was withdrawn to Russia during summer 1993. According to a Press Release from the Embassy of Belarus, four more regiments will leave Belarus in 1994, with the remaining regiments to return to Russia in 1995. By mid-1996, the Mozyr and the Lida rocket divisions will be completely disbanded, in accordance with the START I Treaty. After the removal of the SRF troops, the missile bases will be under Belarusian control.

["Strategic Missiles Being Removed From Belarus," Press Release from the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus to the United States of America, 3/21/94.]

12/93: UPDATE ON MISSILE TRANSFER PROGRESS

According to officials at the Belarusian Defense Ministry, 27 missiles were withdrawn by the end of 12/93, bringing the number of SS-25s on Belarusian territory back down to 54 by 1994.

["CIS Strategic Forces," ARMS CONTROL TODAY, 5/94, p. 26; and Paris AFP, 12/22/93, in "Twenty-Seven Belarusian SS-25 Missiles To Be Dismantled in Russia," JPRS-TND-93-003, 1/31/94, p. 18.]

6/92: INITIAL ESTIMATE ON BELARUSIAN DENUCLEARIZATION TIMETABLE

Belarus estimated that it would take seven years to fully rid itself of nuclear weapons.

[FBIS-SOV-92-116, 6/16/92, p. 2.]