



March 26, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President of the United States

The Honorable Rishi Sunak
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

The Honorable Giorgia Meloni
Prime Minister of Italy

The Honorable Emmanuel Macron
President of the Republic of France

The Honorable Olaf Scholz
Chancellor of Germany

The Honorable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada

The Honorable Fumio Kishida
Prime Minister of Japan

The Honorable Vladimir Zelensky
President of Ukraine

The Honorable Von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

The Honorable Charles Michel
President of the European Council

Dear President Joseph Biden, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, President Emmanuel Macron, Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Council President Charles Michel, President Vladimir Zelensky,

On March 25, 2023, Russian president Vladimir Putin announced plans to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus. This is a serious violation of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. On December 5, 1994, at the OSCE summit in Budapest, the leaders of the three countries - the United States, Great Britain and Russia signed a Memorandum on Security Assurances in connection to Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Belarus became a part of the Non-Proliferation treaty as a non-nuclear state. The permanent members of the UN Security Council took obligations to respect the non-nuclear status of the newly independent states, so they would not become a legitimate target for high precision weapons that could detonate the nuclear stockpiles.

On March 22, 2023, the Joint Statement signed by Russian and Chinese leaders Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, stated: "All nuclear powers must not deploy nuclear weapons outside their national territories and must withdraw all their nuclear weapons placed abroad". Thus, Russia has violated numerous international agreements and obligations on nuclear nonproliferation.

As a person who was involved in the fulfillment of the START II Treaty, CFE Treaty, PFP program and co-chaired with Willian J. Perry, the former US Secretary of Defense, the Joint US-Belarus Commission on the Nunn-Lugar program and the co-author of the Budapest Memorandum I understand the fatal consequences of such a step.

In 2020 approximately a million people went out to the cities of Belarus with only two demands: the release of political prisoners and new fair elections. Only because of Putin's support, were the peaceful protests suppressed and new fair elections prevented. Putin recognized Lukashenko as elected president and gave the Minsk regime 1,5 billion USD in cash immediately after forged elections to pay for the loyalty of the bureaucracy and military which were ready to switch sides. The results of the 2020 presidential election were not recognized by the people of Belarus. Citizen Lukashenko has no right to represent the Republic of Belarus. The people of Belarus deprived Lukashenko of the right to represent the people of Belarus and did not consent to Putin deploying nuclear weapons in our country.

According to the Geneva Declaration on Terrorism, state terrorism is defined as the practices of a police state targeted against its own people and includes surveillance, dispersal of peaceful demonstrations, control over media, killings, beatings, tortures, false arrests, mass arrests, show trials, etc. The Minsk regime has all features of a terrorist state and as such the world community should not allow it to have nuclear weapons on its territory.

The world can stand on the brink of a nuclear war and we must do everything possible to prevent a catastrophe. Putin and Lukashenko repeatedly threatened to use nuclear weapons from the territory of Belarus against European countries, including Great Britain.

We therefore urge you to:

1. Create an emergency High Level Segment that would include G-7, the European Union, Ukraine, as well as representatives of the Belarus Democratic Forces with the necessary competence and experience to discuss the situation.
2. Raise the issue at the UN Security Council and at the UN General Assembly with the agenda focused on Russia's violation of commitments to international law and guiding principles of the United Nations regarding the respect of the territorial integrity of other member states as well as security agreements in the sphere of nuclear weapons.
3. The countries of the European Union together with the United States and Great Britain should issue an ultimatum to Lukashenko to release political hostages or halt all freight trains from Belarus to the EU. The ultimatum will result in serious friction between the Lukashenko regime, Russia and China, which has used Belarus' territory to deliver its goods to the EU and will inevitably lead to release of all political prisoners. This could revive the activity of the Belarus people and launch a large-scale national campaign against the deployment of nuclear weapons on its territory.

Thank you for your consideration.

Please contact us promptly to discuss the situation.

Sincerely,

Valery Tsepka,

First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1994-1997), Ambassador of Belarus to the United States (1997-2002), Director of the Belarusian High-Tech Park (2005-2017), Candidate for the Presidency of Belarus (2020) and other Candidates of the 2020 election who are now in prison as well as other participants of the Belarus Democratic Forum