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Nuclear Security Issues to Raise with Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, and Kazakh Leaders

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Authority: EO 13526

Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS

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Background

Of the four republics that US Government officials are slated to visit, not all of them have indicated a desire to have Soviet nuclear weapons withdrawn from their territory. Ukraine and Byelorussia have declared their intention to become nuclear-free. Russian and Kazakh officials, on the other hand, have consistently shown a willingness since the coup to retain nuclear forces currently deployed in their republics, although they acknowledge the need for centralized control of them. Kazakh President Nazarbayev has closed the Soviet nuclear test facility at Semipalatinsk, nonetheless, because of radiation hazards that nuclear tests present to the population. Ukraine President Kravchuk has stressed that he wants the nuclear arsenal based in the Ukraine destroyed, but he stated that—until this happens—Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Kazakhstan should form a "collective body" that would place all nuclear weapons under its control. The kind of control sought by Kravchuk and the leaders of the other three republics likely would not involve day-to-day operational control but would entail the right to veto any decisions to use nuclear forces stationed on their territory—or possibly all nuclear forces irrespective of where they are based. The issue of the four strategic nuclear republics forming a collective nuclear control body was a topic of discussion by the heads of Russia, Ukraine, and Byelorussia at their 7 December meeting in Minsk. According to a declaration issued the day after the meeting, nuclear weapons likely will remain under a single command and control system with a civilian authority at its head and possibly a "three button" system for launch. ~~(S)~~

Russia. The Russian government has been slow to develop its own national security apparatus, refraining from establishing its own Defense Ministry and occasionally declaring itself successor to the USSR military and its nuclear weapons. Russia's strategy has been to preserve a central military that would control nuclear weapons in the Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, and Kazakh republics. Russia strongly influences the central military through senior appointments. ~~(S)~~

After initially stating that all nuclear weapons should be transferred to Russia, Yel'tsin has made concessions to find common ground between retention of a central military and allowing some voice by republics in the control of these weapons. Russia, Ukraine, and Byelorussia in their 8 December agreement indicated that there would be a "common strategic space under unified command, including unified control over nuclear weapons." Gorbachev's, in his response on 9 December, refused to acknowledge the authority of these three republic leaders and indicated that he is prepared to fight them over control of the center. ~~(S)~~

Ukraine. The Ukrainian position on security issues has evolved rapidly since the coup in August. In late October, the Ukrainian parliament authorized creating a military force—made up of ground, air, and naval units—not to exceed 450,000 men. It appears likely though that the ultimate size of Ukrainian forces will be much smaller than what was authorized because of both political and economic factors. President Kravchuk has consistently supported central control over nuclear weapons, but insists on having veto authority over the use of those weapons. Although Kravchuk has called for the destruction—

13-M-3421-A1

~~SECRET NOFORN~~

preferably under international supervision--of all nuclear weapons based in the Ukraine, there are some Ukrainian radical nationalists who have argued that the republic should retain at least some nuclear weapons. ~~(S/NF)~~

Byelorussia. Byelorussian officials want continued membership in a collective security arrangement dominated by a central Ministry of Defense, but a number of factors are forcing them to consider steps toward a more independent security posture. First and foremost, the disintegration of the USSR may lead to the breakup of a central military. Moreover, the potential for unrest among poorly housed military forces relocating to Byelorussia from Eastern Europe may force the Byelorussians to develop second thoughts about depending on central military authorities for security. Finally, public momentum in the republic for increased sovereignty, combined with a worsening economy, might persuade the Byelorussian leadership to create substantial independent security forces. In the near-to mid-term, however, Byelorussia has neither the financial resources nor the human talent to form such forces. Furthermore, it does not have the resources to undertake the task of destroying nuclear weapons that are currently based in the republic. Byelorussia for the foreseeable future, therefore, is likely to seek help from newly created central institutions, Russia, or the international community in dealing with its defense responsibilities. ~~(S/NF)~~

Kazakhstan. The 8 December agreement by Slavic leaders to form a new commonwealth raises the likelihood that a serious discussion of the "nuts and bolts" of Kazakhstan's national security policy will quickly move to the front burner of Kazakh politics. In the recent past, the Kazakhs have pressed for a role in determining union defense policy, but sought to reassure the West that they would accept US-Soviet arms control treaties and satisfy Russia that they did not desire to possess or independently control nuclear weapons. The agreement by the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and Byelorussia to abolish the USSR, however, will almost certainly force Nazarbayev to contain resentment of possible Slavic *dictate* in Kazakhstan and defend--or possibly rethink--his policy that the republic requires only a minimal national guard force. With its ethnically polarized population (half of which is Russian or European and concentrated in the northern half of the republic), Kazakhstan's small national guard force is ill-prepared to deal effectively with any medium- or large-scale unrest that could develop in response to the Minsk agreement. ~~(S/NF)~~

Nazarbayev in the wake of the Minsk meeting on 8 December has displayed some concern for the Slavic republics acting unilaterally. On 9 December Nazarbayev called for a treaty to confirm that all strategic nuclear weapons would be "administered from a single center." Of all the non-Slavic republics, Kazakhstan has traditionally been the strongest advocate of a continued military union because of its ethnically split population and vulnerable geographic position. In light of the 8 December agreement, Nazarbayev probably would be interested in gaining a share of control over the nuclear arsenal--at least over those nuclear weapons in his republic. ~~(S/NF)~~

General Nuclear Policy and Security Issues

1. What is your policy on the control of nuclear weapons?
 - a. Do you see any long term benefits to retaining nuclear weapons in your republic?
 - b. Would your policy change if the Union truly disintegrates? If so, how?
2. Have you entered into discussions with central authorities on the removal or dismantlement of nuclear weapons based in your republic?
If so,

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

~~SECRET NOFORN~~

- a. With whom are you discussing these matters? (Ministry of Defense?, General Staff?)
 - b. What kind of assistance are central authorities offering or providing?
 - c. What kind of timeframe have you settled on for the removal or dismantlement of nuclear weapons based in your republic?
3. (For Byelorussia and Kazakhstan)
To what extent are you waiting to see what the Ukraine does before developing your own policy on nuclear weapons based in your republic?
4. Did you or your representatives have any discussions about a common nuclear policy at your 7 December meeting in Minsk?
If so,
- a. What nuclear safety, security, and dismantlement issues were raised at the meeting?
 - b. Was there any discussion of collective security arrangements? If so, how did you envision setting up such arrangements? Will the Soviet Defense Ministry be the focal point?
 - c. Was Kazakhstan present at the meeting? If not, why were they excluded?
5. Do you envision circumstances where you may want to take over operational control of nuclear weapons based in your republic and the process of dismantling them?
6. (For Ukraine)
Have you taken any concrete steps to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)?
(For Byelorussia)
Do you support the NPT? If so, what concrete measures are you taking to implement your declared support for NPT?
7. Have you sought out assistance from any of the West European governments on dismantling nuclear weapons based in your republic?
8. Have any arrangements been made by central authorities to provide you with the means (such as a dedicated encrypted telephone or a special briefcase which contains nuclear codes) with which you could exercise your veto authority over the use of nuclear forces based on your territory?
If so,
- a. What are these means?
 - b. Can you exercise your authority in all circumstances?
If not, what are the constraining factors?
9. Have you formulated any contingency plans to ensure the security of nuclear weapons based in your republic if the disintegration of the Union results in the General Staff losing control of them?

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

~~SECRET NOFORN~~

10. Has there been any consolidation or removal of nuclear weapons in your republic?
 - a. If so, what has been the nature of this activity?
 - b. Was your approval secured in advance? If not, what would be your response to the center or Russia unilaterally removing nuclear weapons
 - b. Has the activity been in response to President Gorbachev's 5 October nuclear reduction proposal?
 - c. Have you provided any assistance to this activity? If so, what kind of support have you provided?
11. Would you continue to supply nuclear forces base in your republic with food, fuel, and housing if economic difficulties become so pronounced in your republic that you could not provide these things to your citizens in adequate quantities?
12. (For the Ukraine)
Were you concerned about rumors of Russia planning a nuclear strike against the Ukraine? If not, why? Did you receive reassurances from Russian political leaders?

Technical Nuclear Issues

Number and Types of Warheads—for all the republics, regardless of an interest in eliminating warheads.

1. Do you know the status of the Soviet nuclear warhead inventory in your republic (i.e. the number, types, and locations)?
2. Do you know the parameters—technical characteristics, size, weight, volume, etc.—that need to be considered in the elimination process?
3. Do you know if these warheads have safety mechanisms and, if so, the types to prevent unauthorized use or accidental detonations?
4. Do the storage facilities provide adequate physical security, i.e. protection against armed terrorist acts?
5. How many of the warheads currently stored in your republic are to be dismantled because of Gorbachev's proposals?
6. How many other warheads are candidates for dismantlement (e.g. from INF, START, and weapons withdrawn from Eastern Europe)?
7. What special nuclear materials (SNM) does each type of warhead contain and is there a radiological hazard in handling any warhead?

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

~~SECRET NOFORN~~

8. Do you know the current, standard accounting procedures for Soviet nuclear warheads?
9. Can you assure the West that all nuclear warheads can be/have been accounted for?
 - a. How will the warheads being dismantled be tracked?
 - b. Do these procedures include components of warheads as well?

Dismantlement. For republics that have expressed an interest in eliminating weapons in-place rather than transferring them back to Russia. (Note: These questions may have been overcome by recent events, e.g. Kravchuk's statement following the Ukraine vote for independence, that warheads could be sent to Russia for elimination, but are provided if the delegation perceives any republic desire to dismantle weapons in-place).

10. How are dismantlement and destruction defined?
11. Do you have the means—technical capability, expertise, facilities, etc.—to do this in a way to assure the safety and security of each warhead?
12. What do you see as constituting "elimination" of a warhead as Gorbachev stated, and do you agree?
13. How do you plan to dismantle the warheads?
14. Who are the technical experts and what are their qualifications?
15. How do you perceive the complexity of the dismantlement process?
16. Where would the warheads be dismantled, i.e. what facilities would be used?
17. Does sufficient transport capability exist to carry out your schedule of nuclear warhead dismantlement and elimination?
 - a. How will they be transported?
 - b. How much time will it take?
 - c. What measures would be taken against the increased vulnerability to the security of warheads during transport, given the current conditions of unrest?
18. What would be done with the various components that of the weapon when dismantled?
 - a. Would the SNM be returned to Russia or stored in the republic?
 - b. What facilities would be used for the destruction of the components?
19. If you plan to store the SNM in the republic, what facilities would be used and how would proper security and accounting be provided?

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

~~SECRET NOFORN~~

- a. If the military is to retain control, what are its plans regarding the disposition and use of the SNM?
- b. If civilian authorities take control, are there any different plans regarding SNM disposition and use?

Dismantlement Facilities

20. Where are the dismantlement facilities for nuclear warheads
Are they in Russia?
21. What is the capacity of these facilities to eliminate warheads (i.e. number per year)? Will this capacity be expanded?
22. Will some initial phases of the dismantlement process be accomplished at sites on your territory currently being used to store warheads, before they are transferred to disassembly facilities elsewhere?
 - a. To what extent would these phases of the dismantlement account for total dismantlement?
 - b. Which storage sites will be used for this initial work?
 - c. How safe will these partially dismantled warheads be for transporting?
23. Will the republics monitor the dismantlement or destruction process of warheads from their republics?
24. How will the republics handle or monitor the SNM recovered from dismantled warheads to assure they are not used for new warheads, other military purposes, or sold to other countries?
25. What are the safety concerns for personnel and facilities that will be involved in the dismantlement process (e.g. radiation exposure, accidental HE detonation, toxic materials, other industrial processes, etc.)?
26. What plans have been made for the possibility of an accident during the dismantlement process?
 - a. Are specially trained personnel and equipment available in case of such an emergency?
27. Can the West be of any assistance in any aspect of the dismantlement process?

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

~~SECRET NOFORN~~

Republic and Soviet Officials Likely to be Involved in Republic Nuclear Security Issues.

Russia:

Russian President Boris Yel'tsin

Chief of the USSR State Council's
Military Reform Committee and Yel'tsin's
Defense Adviser General Konstantin
Kobets

Chief of the Commission for Liquidating
Political/Military Departments General
Dmitry Volkogonov

Chairman of the Russian Committee for
Defense and Security and First Deputy
USSR Defense Minister General Pavel
Grachev

Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet
Committee on Defense and Security Sergei
Stepashin

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

Boris Nikolayevich YEL'TSIN
(Phonetic: YELTsin)

— USSR

*President, Russian Republic
(since June 1991)*

Addressed as: Mr. President



Boris Yel'tsin's courageous and stirring leadership during the abortive coup attempt in August 1991 was the triumphant climax of a year of extraordinary political success. Yel'tsin has emerged as the preeminent political figure in the country, eclipsing even USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev. Yel'tsin was in the process of vigorously advancing a program of radical political and economic reform when the coup attempt erupted. His dramatic and uncompromising reaction to the putsch has raised his stature to mythic proportion in Russians' eyes; it will empower him to promote his reformist program and extend it beyond his own republic. To sustain this success, Yel'tsin must maneuver through a minefield of daunting challenges: republic leaders wary of Russian domination, implementation of an economic program capable of showing tangible gain, and creation of a political system that can establish and preserve a state based on the rule of law.

Yel'tsin's ability to rally the masses to his banner allowed him—even before the coup—to consistently remain ahead of the political curve. He has repeatedly and artfully used his popularity as political leverage since his election as RSFSR Supreme Soviet Chairman by a tiny margin in May 1990. Yel'tsin has transformed the republic's Supreme Soviet from a rubberstamp for Communist orthodoxy into the most progressive legislative body in the country. After his popular election as President in June 1991, Yel'tsin took control of the reform process by attacking the privileges of the Communist Party on a number of fronts, by quickly forming executive bodies capable of following through on his dictates, and by maintaining an alliance with Gorbachev in order to codify his republic's power in a new union treaty. Yel'tsin's multipronged and increasingly effective attack on hardline bastions of power undoubtedly was a key factor in pushing traditionalist leaders to attempt a coup.

Relationship With Gorbachev

Yel'tsin's new stature allows him to shape the nature of his relationship with Gorbachev. He has indicated that he finds Gorbachev useful now as a conciliator among republics and as a guarantee of national stability but has frequently maintained that his support of Gorbachev is conditional. Yel'tsin has admitted that he finds it difficult to occupy the number-two slot

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and that he will continue to dictate political terms to Gorbachev. Yel'tsin's championing of the USSR President during the coup was a brilliant political stroke that allowed him to act with unquestionable constitutional authority.

Career Data

Yel'tsin was born on 1 February 1931. He received a degree in construction engineering from the Ural Polytechnic Institute in Sverdlovsk in 1955. Yel'tsin joined the CPSU in 1961. From 1968 to 1976 he was a department chief and then a secretary of the Sverdlovsk Oblast Party Committee (obkom). As obkom first secretary from 1976 to 1985, he gained a reputation as a workaholic and a taskmaster—and was rewarded with election to the CPSU Central Committee in 1981. In April 1985, within a month of Gorbachev's selection as General Secretary, Yel'tsin was called to Moscow to become head of the CC Construction Department; three months later he was named a party secretary. Appointed first secretary of the Moscow city party committee later that year, Yel'tsin engaged in a series of unprecedented activities: his public discussions of Soviet domestic ills and of the hypocrisy and unwarranted privileges of officials were extraordinary for someone of his rank, and he sprang surprise investigations on factories he suspected of corruption. He became a candidate member of the Politburo in February 1986.

Less than two years later, frustrated by the slow pace of *perestroika* and the resistance he encountered in his efforts to transform Moscow, Yel'tsin took a bold step. He lashed out at his foes during the October 1987 CC plenum, despite pleas from Gorbachev to withhold his criticism until after the Revolution Day celebrations in November. Shortly after Yel'tsin's outburst, he was unceremoniously fired from his party positions and relegated to the political periphery as First Deputy Minister of the State Committee for Construction, a post he held until his landslide election to the USSR Supreme Soviet in May 1989. In dramatic fashion, following his subsequent election as RSFSR Supreme Soviet Chairman in May 1990, Yel'tsin resigned from the CPSU at the July 1990 party congress. He officially left his position as a USSR Supreme Soviet deputy in December 1990.

Personal Data

Much of Yel'tsin's appeal stems from his larger-than-life image, which he enthusiastically promotes. This image was powerfully reinforced by his heroic defense of democracy during the failed coup. Reportedly outspoken even as a youth, Yel'tsin in his 1990 autobiography *Against the Grain* boasted that he was something of a hooligan in earlier years (in a boyhood prank involving a grenade, he lost his left thumb and forefinger). During Yel'tsin's visit to the United States in 1989, his boisterous behavior left a negative impression in some quarters.

Although he understands some German and English, he does not speak either language well.

He still regularly swims and likes to play tennis and pool.

He and his wife, Naya, have two daughters and several grandchildren.

6 September 1991

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

Appeal CIA 3.3(b)(1),(6) + 6.2(d)

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Ukraine:

Ukraine President Kravchuk

Ukraine Foreign Minister M. Zlenko

Ukraine Defense Minister Morozov

Ukraine Deputy Defense Minister
General Lieutenant
Vladimir V. Osokin

Ukraine Chief of Staff
Georgiy V. Zhiritsa

Ukraine Minister for National Security
Y. Marchuk

Ukraine Ministry of Foreign Affairs
representative V. Ye. Belashov
(reportedly an active participant in
the Joint Compliance and Inspection
Commission)

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

Appeal CIA 3.3(b)(1)(6) + 6.2(d)

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

Appeal CIA 3.3(b)(1),(6) + 6.2(d)

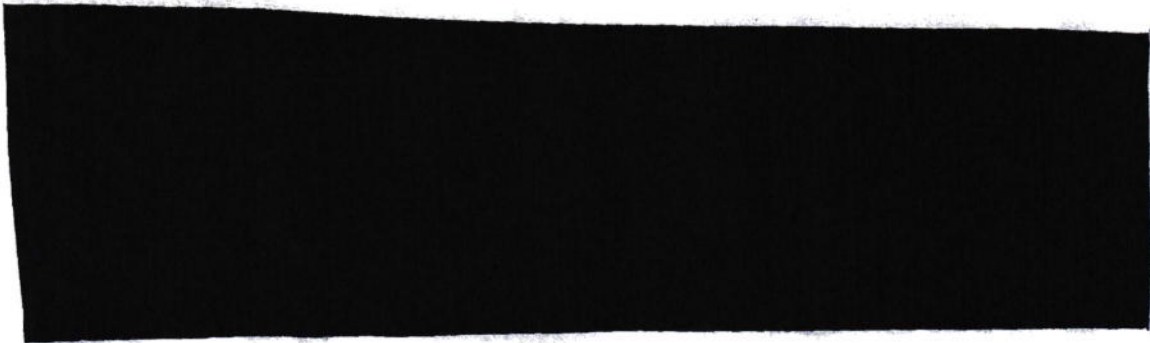
DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

Appeal CIA 3.3(b)(1),(6) + 6.2(d)

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

Appeal CIA 3.3(b)(1),(6) + 3.5(c)

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017



Appeal CIA 3.3(b)(1),(6) + 6.2(d)

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

~~SECRET NOFORN~~

Byelorussia:

Chairman of the Byelorussian
Supreme Soviet and Chairman of the
Byelorussian Security Council Stanislav
Shushkevich

Byelorussia Foreign Minister Petr
Kravchenko

Deputy Chairman of the Byelorussian
Supreme Soviet for the Standing
Commission for National Security and
Defense Leonid Privalov

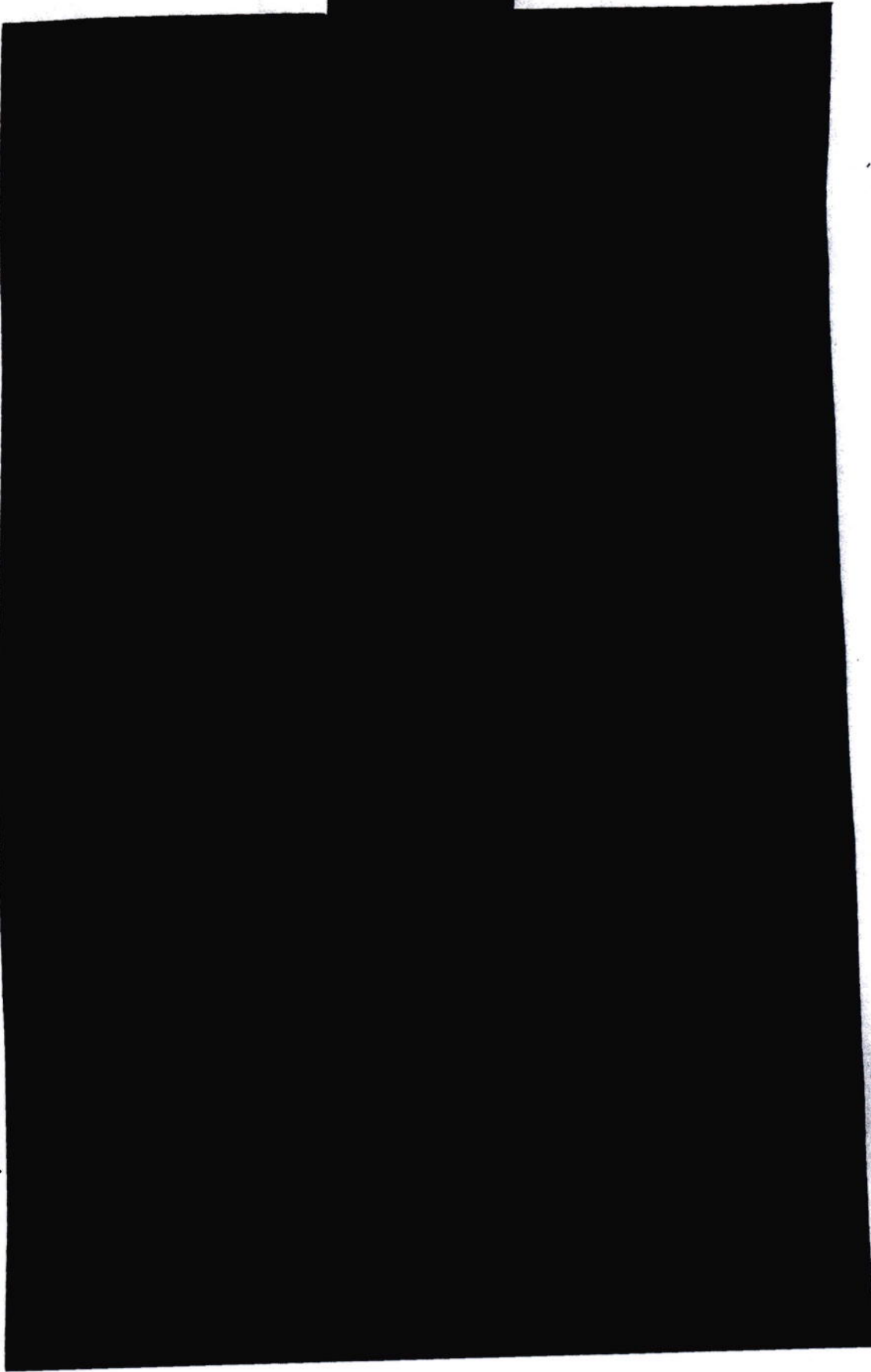
Soviet commander of the Byelorussian
Military District General Colonel
Kostenko

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

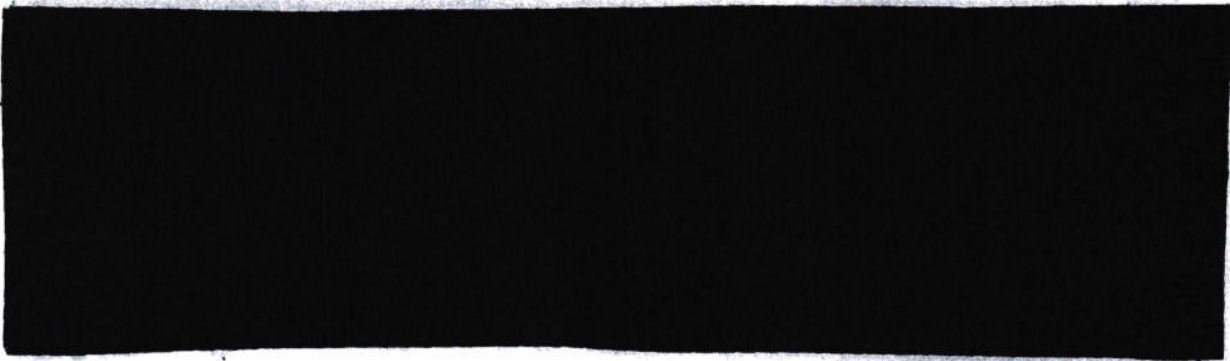
Appeal CIA 3.3(b)(1), (c) + 6.2(a)

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

Appeal CIA 3.3(b)(1), (6) + 6.2(d)



DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017



Appeal CIA 3.3(b)(1)(6) + 6.2(a)

~~SECRET NOFORN~~

Kazakhstan:

President of Kazakh Republic
Nursultan Nazarbayev

Kazakh Chief of Staff, Presidential
Council Nurtay Abykayev

Kazakh (Premier), Chairman Cabinet of
Ministers Sergei Tereshchko

Kazakh Deputy Chief of Staff,
Presidential Council Vladimir Ni

Chairman, Kazakhstan State Defense
Committee General Lieutenant Sagadat
Nurmagambetov

Kazakh Minister of Foreign Affairs
Akmaral Arystanbekova

Kazakh Vice President
Yerik Asanbayev

Chairman, Nevada-Semipalatinsk
Movement; Secretary, Kazakh Writers
Union; Member Collegium USSR Foreign
Affairs Ministry Olzhas Suleymenov

Soviet commander of the Turkestan
Military District General Colonel
Ivan Fuzhenko

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

Appeal CIA 3.3(b)(1),(6) + 6.2(d)

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

Appeal CIA 3.3(b)(1), (c) + 6.2(d)



DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 10 2017

Appeal CIA 3.3(b)(1),(6) + 6.2(a)