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**COMMUNICATION OF 3 DECEMBER 1996 RECEIVED FROM  
THE PERMANENT MISSION OF BELARUS TO  
THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

1. On 4 December 1996, the Secretariat received a communication of 3 December 1996 from the Permanent Mission of Belarus transmitting the text of a press release by the Mission about the withdrawal of the last inter-continental ballistic missile from Belarus.
2. As requested by the Permanent Mission of Belarus, the press release is being circulated for the information of Member States of the Agency.

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We are convinced that the guarantees of security, given to Belarus at the OSCE summit in Budapest in 1994 by the heads of state and government of the USA, Russia and Great Britain, should become, after the withdrawal of nuclear weapons, one of the guarantors of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country.

We are convinced that the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from the territory of the Republic of Belarus creates a sound platform for the implementation of the initiative on creating a nuclear-free space in the centre of Europe which was put forward by the President of Belarus on 3rd June 1996.

The successful implementation of the idea of creating a nuclear-free zone in the centre of Europe could become one of the most effective paths to reducing tension in Europe and in international relations as a whole, easing anxiety in connection with the planned NATO expansion and the announcements by certain countries in eastern Europe of their willingness to accommodate NATO nuclear weapons on their territories. The idea of creating a nuclear-free zone is an important step on the path to strengthening the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation; it does not contradict present-day military and political realities in Europe and does not encroach upon anybody's national interests.

After the withdrawal of the last Russian nuclear missiles from the territory of Belarus a nuclear-free zone in central and eastern Europe has *de facto* been created. In our view, this can and should be legally secured.

The Republic of Belarus expects that its position on issues of nuclear disarmament will be properly evaluated and supported by the international community.

Vienna, 3 December, 1996

Пастаяннае прадстаўніцтва  
РЭСПУБЛІКІ БЕЛАРУСЬ  
пры міжнародных арганізацыях  
у Вене



Permanent Mission of the  
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to the International Organizations  
in Vienna

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## *PRESS-RELEASE*

On the 27th November 1996, a historic event took place on Belarusian soil, in the small town of Yatsuki, the last inter-continental ballistic missile left the frontiers of the Republic of Belarus, leaving an area of 207,600 square km in the centre of Europe nuclear free.

Following the break-up of the USSR, a young state - the Republic of Belarus - was the first in the world to give up voluntarily, as a sign of good will, the possession of nuclear weapons and announced a nuclear-free policy.

In April 1992, Belarus announced the completion of the withdrawal to Russia of all the tactical nuclear warheads deployed on Belarusian territory in compliance with the Treaty on the Liquidation of Medium- and Long-Range Missiles signed by the USSR and the USA.

On 4th February 1993, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus ratified the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Armaments of 31 July 1991 and the related Lisbon Protocol of 25 May 1992, and also took a decision that Belarus sign up to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the capacity of a signatory country not owning such weapons.

On 2nd-3rd December, a meeting of heads of state and government of the OSCE member countries is held in Lisbon to decide on the issue of building a new Europe. Four years ago, by signing the protocol on joining the Treaty on Strategic Nuclear Weapons in Lisbon, Belarus demonstrated to the world community the peace-loving nature of its foreign policy and its aspiration to make a weighty contribution to the matter of strengthening European and global security. The withdrawal of nuclear weapons from the territory of Belarus is clear proof of its course towards reducing the nuclear threat, which it undertook four years ago.

On 24th September 1996, Belarus was one of the first countries to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, in accordance with which its signatory countries undertake not to carry out any nuclear test explosions.

The withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Belarusian territory marks a new stage in the history of our country. We are grateful to all the states and international organisations which directly or indirectly helped and are helping us to implement the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Weapons.