



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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8107169 (XR 8107122)

March 7, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR RICHARD V. ALLEN
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Letter from Soviet President Brezhnev

Forwarded herewith is a letter (and translation thereof) to the President from Soviet President Brezhnev. The letter was delivered by Soviet Chargé Bessmertnyk to Acting Secretary Stoessel in the late afternoon of March 6. The translation was prepared during the night.

The Secretary believes we should conduct a thorough analysis and consult with key allies prior to transmission of a response.

We further recommend against publicly acknowledging receipt of the letter, unless the Soviets make the fact public.

John H. Kelly
for L. Paul Bremer, III
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

Letter to the President
and Translation

DECLASSIFIED

NIS 597-001 #11

BY *AMF* 10/21/99

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Dear Mr. President:

I consider it necessary to turn to you concerning the most vital problems that are raised by the present international situation. I suppose you are aware that the Congress of our Party, which recently took place in Moscow, devoted paramount attention to analysis and evaluation of the international situation; as well as to the practical conclusions stemming from this. The question was, what should be done in order to preserve peace and to ensure for present and future generations the most basic right of each person -- the right to life. This is the essence of the decisions that were taken, which will determine the foreign policy course of the Soviet Union in the years ahead.

We are realists, and of course we take due account of the fact that improvement of the international situation, the lessening and liquidation of the threat of war depend not only upon us but also upon the will of other governments, upon the success of establishing more appropriate mutual understanding and effective cooperation, both bilaterally and multilaterally, in resolving the vital problems of present times.

We are convinced that one's attitude toward the strategic military balance that has taken shape between the USSR and the USA, between the Warsaw Pact states and those of NATO, is of fundamental significance here. The Soviet Union has not sought,

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and does not seek military superiority. But neither will we permit such superiority to be established over us. Such attempts, as well as attempts to talk to us from a position of strength, are absolutely futile.

The existing strategic military equilibrium is objectively serving the cause of preserving world peace. We are for consistently bringing matters to the lowering of level of the equilibrium, without violating its balance. To attempt to win in an arms race, to count on victory in an atomic war -- would be dangerous madness. It must be recognized that endless competition and accumulation of ever newer weapons, while keeping the world under tension, is the real source of the military threat that hangs over all countries. We are prepared to act, hand in hand with all countries and above all with the United States, in decisive struggle against this threat. It is clear the great extent to which success here depends upon the joint actions precisely of our two countries....

We are in general for normal, good relations with the USA, for the development of these relations in the interests of the peoples of our two countries, in the interests of peace.

The present state of Soviet-American relations, the sharpness of the problems demanding solution, create the imperative need for the conduct and development of dialogue that is active and at all levels. The Soviet Union favors

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such a dialogue and is prepared to come to agreement regarding mutually acceptable decisions, with account for the lawful interests of the sides.

Soviet-American summit meetings have special significance in all this, and at the Congress we considered it feasible and advisable to speak out directly in favor of such a meeting.

As is known, in recent years the Soviet Union has put forward numerous proposals for reducing the threat of war and for strengthening international security. Many of these have been approved by the UN and other impressive fora. All of our proposals remain in force and we will work toward their realization.

However, the current situation is such that it is necessary to intensify efforts still more in order to improve the international situation radically, to give people confidence in a safe, peaceful future. Guided by this vital necessity, the Soviet Union has come forward with new, large initiatives permeated with deep concern to restrain the arms race, deepen detente, strengthen peace.

I found it necessary to call your personal attention, Mr. President, to these proposals, put forward, as you know, at the Congress of our Party. Apart from the scale and the far-reaching character of these initiatives, I wish in particular to underscore their realism, the account they

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take of both our own interests as well as the interests of our partners.

Experience shows how complicated and difficult it is to liquidate, to extinguish hotbeds of military conflict. It is therefore important to conduct preventative work to prevent such hotbeds from occurring.

In this context, measures to strengthen trust in the military sphere, carried out at the decision of the all-European conference, play a positive role. The Soviet Union has made proposals for widening significantly the volume of these measures.

We are now proposing to widening substantially the zone of applicability of such measures. We are prepared to extend them to the entire European part of the USSR, on the condition, of course, of a corresponding widening of the zone of measures of trust by the Western states. I would like in this connection once again to emphasize that the Soviet Union favors the successful conclusion of the Madrid meeting. Adoption at it of a decision to call an all-European conference for discussion and solution of problems of military detente and disarmament in Europe would have a particularly important significance.

We also consider that the working out and adoption of measures of trust could also be useful in the area of the Far East. The Soviet Union would be prepared to conduct

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concrete negotiations on this account with all interested countries. Without predetermining now all problems relating to such negotiations, attention nonetheless should be called to the fact that in this region not only the USSR, China and Japan are neighbors. As is known, there is also a U.S. military presence. This and other specifics of the region would have to be considered, so that measures of trust would in fact be effective.

In some countries the opinion is expressed that our recent proposals concerning the Persian Gulf cannot be separated from the question of the presence of a Soviet military contingent in Afghanistan. Our position consists of the following: while prepared to reach agreement on the Persian Gulf as an independent problem, and to participate in a separate settlement of the situation around Afghanistan, we also do not object to the questions connected with Afghanistan being discussed in conjunction with the questions of the security of the Persian Gulf. Such discussions naturally can concern only the international aspects of the Afghan problem, and not the internal affairs of that country. The sovereignty of Afghanistan must be fully protected, as must its status as a nonaligned state.

Proceeding from the exceptional importance -- not only for the USSR and the U.S.A., but also for other countries -- of the problem of limiting and reducing strategic weapons, we

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for our part are prepared to continue without delay appropriate talks with the United States while preserving everything positive that has been achieved thus far in this field. It is understandable that such negotiations can be conducted only on the basis of equality and equal security of the sides.

As one of the practical measures in this area, we are prepared to reach agreement on limiting the deployment of new submarines -- in the U.S.A., the Ohio class, and submarines of a similar type in the USSR. We could also enter into accord on banning modernization of existing ballistic missiles and the creation of new ones for deployment on these submarines.

Attempting to avert the dangerous accumulation of nuclear missiles in Europe and to facilitate the speediest possible attainment of a decision regarding such weapons, we propose that agreement be reached on establishing a moratorium now on the deployment in Europe of new medium-range nuclear missile facilities in the USSR and the countries of NATO -- that is, to freeze both quantitatively and qualitatively the existing level of such means, including, of course, the forward-based nuclear facilities of the U.S.A. in this region. Such a moratorium could come into force as soon as negotiations on this question commence, and would be effective until a treaty is concluded on limiting, or even better, on reducing such nuclear facilities in Europe. In this we proceed from the position that both sides would cease all preparations

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for deployment of corresponding additional means, including the American Pershing II missiles and ground-based strategic cruise missiles.

Judging from reports we have received, in certain places attempts are being made to represent the situation as if there were nothing new in this Soviet proposal. Nothing could be further from the truth. Assertions of this sort can only indicate an effort to evade a decision of the matter, a lack of desire to take account of the vital interests of the European peoples.

We consider that informing the general public, indeed all people, of the consequences with which atomic war is fought would have great significance, and would in particular bring additional influence on governments for attainment of agreements directed in a practical way toward averting such a war. With this aim in mind, we propose the creation of an authoritative international committee that would demonstrate the vital necessity of averting a nuclear catastrophe. The committee might include the most prominent scientists from various countries. Very likely the General Secretary of the UN could play a role in the realization of this aim. The conclusions reached by the committee should be made known to the entire world.

Further, for solution of many current international problems a far-sighted approach, political will and courage, authority and influence are required. This is why we believe it would be useful to convene a special session of the Security

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Council, with the participation of the top leaders of the permanent and non-permanent member states of the Council, in order to seek the key to improving the international atmosphere and preventing war. Leaders of other states obviously could take part in the session, if they wished. Naturally, thorough preparation for such a session would be required to ensure positive results.

Returning to the theme of hotbeds of tension and the task of liquidating them, I would like particularly to single out the question of the situation in the Middle East. No matter how one regards that which has thus far been done in this region, it is clear that political settlement there has been set back. The present situation urgently demands a return to a collective search for an all-embracing settlement on a just and realistic basis, which could be done, say within the framework of a specially convened international conference.

The Soviet Union is prepared to take part in a constructive spirit in such work jointly with other interested Liberation Front, and with Israel. We are prepared for such a joint search with the U.S.A., with which we have had in the past certain experience. We are prepared to cooperate with European states, with all who sincerely desire securing a just and stable peace in the Middle East. The U.N. clearly can continue to play a useful role here.

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These are the questions that I wanted to touch upon in this message. We expect, Mr. President, that you will regard our proposals with appropriate attention. As you see, they embrace a wide circle of problems and foresee measures of a political and military character; they concern various types of weapons and military forces; they touch upon the situation in various regions of the world.

We of course understand that time is required for study and consideration. Probably the necessity for some sort of consultations, exchange of views -- in short, for various forms of dialogue -- will arise. We are prepared for this.

Respectfully,

L. Brezhnev