

Dear Mr. President,

I carefully studied your letter of April 24. And I will tell you right away of my appreciation of the frank expression of your views and feelings as well as the principle directions of your Administration's foreign policy. It is in the same spirit of frankness that I want to give you my reply believing that clarifying mutually the positions of each other has an important significance in developing a dialogue between us. This, as I understand, corresponds to your intentions too.

Your letter, regrettably, is based upon a general premise of the Soviet Union being responsible for the tensions existing in the world. Such a premise not only is at variance with the factual state of affairs, but leads away from the real causes behind the current situation, and, thus, can only make it more difficult to find ways to eliminate those causes in order to remove the tensions.

All assertions concerning a Soviet military threat or our alleged search for military superiority do not become any more convincing through having them repeated. Aims and intentions which are not ours must not be ascribed to us. After all, we set our goals ourselves. And we, for our part, say in no uncertain terms: the Soviet Union did not have and has no intentions to achieve military superiority. We have no need for it.

Our actions in the field of assuring our country's defense capability - and we are doing nothing beyond that - have always been only a forced reaction in response to the military programs carried

out in the West. Indeed, it is a generally recognized fact that every new spiral in the arms race has been initiated by the United States. And what is typical is that each time such thrusts were accompanied by vociferous outcries about the "Soviet military threat", about the US "lagging behind" on a particular kind of weapon. True, it would be admitted later on in a whisper that no "lagging behind" had in fact taken place, that someone, as it were, had made a "wrong calculation". But, by then, what was done was done, new weapon systems had been deployed and the quantity of arms amassed had been significantly increased. This is what the facts testify to, and, indeed, they are accessible to everyone.

We are witnessing today an active propagation of the thesis that the alleged "imbalance of forces" has occurred and that the USSR entertains some "sinister intentions". Your predecessors, however, including the President whom you succeeded, recognized that there was a parity in the military area between the USSR and the USA, between the East and the West. Does it mean that all depends on who does the counting?

It is not in the Soviet Union at all that huge military budgets are being adopted and programs are being started on an unprecedented scale to produce new weapon systems, which does not only exceed the defense requirements but reasonable limits in general. Again, it is not in the USSR that demands are being made to rescind agreements reached earlier on arms limitation, that the intention is loudly proclaimed to surpass militarily all other states, that a definite

status is being given to doctrines envisaging the possibility of delivering the first strike and waging "limited" wars with the use of nuclear weapons. And that is precisely the way it is.

Therefore, it is not our side that should be urged to exercise restraint. The Soviet Union is not for the competition in armaments, nor is it for their endless build-up. We stand for the preservation of the existing parity in the military-strategic area, which is the most important guarantee of peace and stability of all peoples, as well as for a gradual reduction of the arms level on the basis of the principle of equality and equal security of either side.

Nor is there any ground, Mr. President, to charge us with having the intention to obtain some unilateral advantages anywhere in the world, to call into doubt our commitment to the principles embodied in the UN Charter, in the Helsinki Final Act or in the Basic Principles of Relations between the USSR and the USA. This simply does not square with the facts.

The Soviet Union is resolutely against interference in the affairs of other peoples, against imposing someone else's will on them. But we are also against anybody arrogating to himself such a right, and when attempts to this effect take place we are invariably on the side of the peoples who stand up for their own independence.

I will address myself briefly to certain specific questions raised in your letter.

You speak positively of our consent to have the zone of application of confidence-building measures in the military area substan-

tially expanded, to include also all of the European part of the USSR. However, the Western participants of the Madrid meeting, including the USA, have up to now been evading the answer to the question what they, for their part, are ready to do in this connection on the basis of reciprocity.

It is to be hoped that the USA will take a more constructive position at the Madrid meeting both on the question of convening a conference on military detente and disarmament in Europe and on the other questions being discussed there, and that it will, thereby, demonstrate its intention to reckon with the hopes of peoples for the continuation and development of the process of strengthening security and cooperation in Europe in accordance with the Final Act.

It is a matter of regret that the USA reacted negatively to our proposal to place a moratorium on deployments of new medium-range nuclear missile systems in Europe by the countries of the NATO and by the USSR. References made in this respect to the necessity of deploying new American medium-range missiles in Western Europe in order to off-set some sort of "superiority" of the Soviet Union simply are not borne out by the actual state of affairs. One might believe that there exist no numerous American forward - based nuclear systems in Europe and near it which are capable of reaching the territory of the USSR or that the nuclear weapons of the US NATO allies have suddenly disappeared. But all that is there, indeed, and we can in no way close our eyes to it.

The objective approach, the principle of equality and equal security require that in making an analysis of the situation one should not limit himself to any single type of weapon, but should see the nuclear potentials in a comprehensive way. A true reflection of the factual state of affairs can be found only in that approach. And this state of affairs is such that the Soviet nuclear weapons in Europe do not exceed the aggregate level of the nuclear systems of the NATO group and, therefore, there exists now in Europe an approximate parity in the respective types of weapons. The replacement by the Soviet Union of the old missiles by the modernized ones has not changed the situation. Accordingly, the moratorium that we propose would merely freeze the existing approximate parity, making it easier to reach agreement on the ways to reduce the level of that parity. We noted that on more than one occasion you expressed yourself in favor of such a reduction.

We cannot view the US desire to station in any case its new missiles in Western Europe as anything but the intention to disrupt the strategic parity and to achieve superiority. It goes without saying that we will have to react to it in a proper way. But wouldn't it be worthwhile giving a thought whether such a turn of events will reinforce anybody's security, including that of the USA? We are convinced it will not.

This is the reason why we call upon the US Administration and you personally to weigh up again, realistically and with all factors in mind, the developing situation and to take steps in order to open the way toward achieving through negotiations an effective limitation

and reduction of nuclear arms in Europe. Given the will on both sides, it is possible, I believe, to reach this goal.

A few words on Poland. It appears that some sinister plans on the part of the USSR are perceived by Washington in everything, and sometimes there is even talk on the possibility of some "internal aggression" in Poland. A question is in order - what at all is meant by the "internal aggression"? Is it possible, for example, that the USA can commit an aggression against itself?

Earlier I already expressed to you our position as well as our assessment of the US behaviour with regard to Poland. It remains the same. The United States must in no way interfere in the Polish domestic affairs.

The United States stated on more than one occasion that it would not like to see the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. It is, in fact, this idea with regard to Afghanistan that is present in your letter too. But the Soviet troops are there not just because we want it to be so. We repeated many times that we would withdraw our limited military contingent, provided the aggression against Afghanistan was ceased and a political settlement of the international aspects of the Afghan problem was found. Should the United States be really willing to facilitate such a development, it could certainly do much in this direction. Mentioning the negative position of the Pakistan leadership doesn't change a thing. It is well known why Islamabad under various artificial pretexts is now avoiding negotiations with Kabul.

Mr. President, in a detailed manner and in the spirit of frankness I have laid down the thoughts which came to me in connection with your letter. I believe this will be useful both for additional clarification of the proposals that had been put forward in my letter of March 6 and for your better understanding of the Soviet position on certain pressing international issues, as well as on questions concerning the relations between our countries.

I hope that our exchange of views as well as the discussions at other levels will help find mutually acceptable solutions which would constitute our common contribution to the strengthening of peace. In this regard I take note of the assurances contained in your letter that the United States is vitally interested in the peaceful resolution of international tensions and that your Administration is prepared to settle disagreements by negotiations.

Sincerely,

L. BREZHNEV

May 27, 1981