

Unofficial translation

His Excellency  
Ronald W. Reagan  
The President of the United States of America  
Washington, D.C.

January 28, 1984

Dear Mr. President:

I have given a careful thought to your letter of December 23. I am answering it with account taken of the subsequent development of the situation and the recent meeting between A.A. Gromyko and Secretary of State G. Shultz in Stockholm.

I already expressed, also in my correspondence with you, our view as to what the Soviet-American relationship should be. I can reaffirm with all due emphasis our principled stand in this regard.

If one must state today that the affairs between our two countries are taking on, to put it frankly, an extremely unfavorable shape, then the reason for it is not our policy. We did not and do not want it to be so. On the contrary, we have been trying persistently not only to straighten up our relations but also to act in such a way that they develop constructively and in a stable manner. We suggested concrete paths which could be followed in order to achieve this objective.

The Soviet Union conducted serious and meaningful negotiations on the nuclear arms, doing the maximum to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. Unfortunately our efforts continued to run against a stonewall. In no way were we able to feel a desire on the part of the U.S. side to reach agreements. I will even add that while assessing the U.S. negotiating posture and practical actions, one cannot fail to draw a conclusion that the U.S. pursued a goal of a different nature - to challenge the security of our country and its allies. There has been nothing so far that convinces us otherwise.

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On more than one occasion we have candidly told the United States that there is a limit in the relations between our countries which one cannot go beyond. It is determined by the genuine security interests.

We were prepared to accept very deep reductions both of the strategic and the European nuclear weapons. With regard to the latter - even to the point of ridding Europe entirely of medium range and tactical nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union continues to be in favor of this. Having started the deployment of its new missiles which are strategic systems, as far as the USSR is concerned, the U.S. side destroyed the very basis on which it was possible to seek an agreement, we have only one view of this step - it is an attempt to upset both the regional and the global balance. So we are reacting accordingly. It appears that the U.S. side has underestimated our resolve to preserve the military and strategic equilibrium, nothing short of equilibrium.

Let us be frank, Mr. President, there is no way of making things look as if nothing has happened. There has been a disruption of the dialogue on the most important questions, a heavy blow has been dealt to the very process of nuclear arms limitation. The tension has grown dangerously. We know this, and you know this, too. In order to correct the situation, practical steps are required on the part of the U.S. side. This is not a matter of some sort of favors or concessions. It is necessary to return to the fundamentals which made it possible in the past to reach agreements, to find mutually acceptable solutions to questions the sides were interested in, in other words, - to follow the principle of equality and equal security.

We see, so far, no signs that the U.S. is prepared to do so. What was said by the Secretary of State in Stockholm confirms that it is the case.

If the United States has an interest to continue an effective process of nuclear arms limitation and reduction, it should seriously weigh the situation and come to proper conclusions. Practical positive steps in this direction would find us duly responsive.

I am convinced that this would considerably facilitate putting the totality of our relations on a more stable and constructive basis, which you speak in favor of in your letter.

I repeat, we are all for it. By the same token, we are for a dialogue - a serious, meaningful dialogue aimed at searching for points of contact and finding concrete solutions to concrete issues, which are numerous.

However, the stumbling block has been, so far, in the fact that we, for the time being, hear only calls in favor of a dialogue. If you, however, review the situation of the past years, you can see that with regard to our proposals to discuss important and acute problems we either have not received a substantive answer, or the reply has been a negative one. The question is, therefore, who stands for a genuine dialogue?

One cannot, we are convinced, speak of a desire to work for restraining the arms race and at the same time refuse to seek an agreement on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests. Such a measure, large as it is, would effectively help slow down the qualitative and quantitative build-up of nuclear arms. This has long been a ripe issue. Many states speak in favor of having it solved.

A definite step in this regard could also be the ratification of the Soviet-American treaties on the limitation of underground nuclear weapon tests and on nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes signed a decade ago. We have not seen and cannot see now any convincing reasons why the United States does not do just that.

And why not try to look for a mutually acceptable solution to the problem of preventing militarization of outer space, while it is not too late to close this extremely dangerous channel of the arms race? We raise this issue as an urgent one which brooks no delay. In this context it is necessary also to solve the issue of banning and abolishing anti-satellite weapons. We have put forward our proposals. We would like you to read them once again and with more attention. They are based on the premise that the United States must have no less interest in solving

this problem than the Soviet Union has. Is it, that the objective necessity has disappeared to exchange views, for instance, on such questions as reducing the military activities in the Indian ocean and limiting conventional arms sales and transfers?

At the Stockholm meeting the Secretary of State spoke in the sense that the U.S. side understood the significance of the Socialist countries' proposals put forward at the Vienna negotiations and that those proposals were under study. Well, there has been enough time to carry out such a study. We are awaiting a concrete answer, so as to make it possible to reach agreement on this important matter.

Even from this list, it is evident that there is subject matter both for a dialogue and for straightening our relations step-by-step, given the will to do so.

It is important at the same time that the readiness for a dialogue be also matched by practical deeds. The latter point, by the way, has a direct bearing on the regional problems, too, be it in Central America, Southern Africa or the situation in the Middle East, that you mentioned. You point out correctly that that region is in a state of a dangerously high tension now because of the situation in Lebanon. Of course, no one would disagree, exercising restraint in this regard is in order. But it is precisely the United States who is directly involved there with its armed forces, that can and should exercise such restraint. Above all, it must withdraw all the troops from there and the Navy forces from the adjacent waters. We are convinced that this would to a substantial degree diffuse the situation in and around Lebanon. This, in turn, would help galvanize the efforts in search of ways to a political settlement in the entire Middle East, which the Soviet Union has been consistently calling for. In other words, the United States can and must, if it wishes to do so, take real steps for the sake of peace in that region.

Briefly, one more matter. It would be only natural if the desire to improve relations and establish a productive dialogue

were accompanied by the creation of an appropriate atmosphere. At any rate, the inflation of animosity is not helpful.

Mr. President, I will be ready to listen to what you think with regard to the thoughts and specific points expressed in the present letter, which have occurred to me in connection with your letter.

Sincerely,

Y. ANDROPOV