

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

February 23, 1984

Dear Mr. President,

We appreciate the kind feelings transmitted on your behalf by Mr. Bush at the hour of sorrow for the Soviet people.

In your letter you expressed some thoughts with regard to Soviet-American relations and spoke in favor of putting them on a constructive basis.

I told Mr. G. Bush and would like to reaffirm it to you personally that our approach of principle to dealing with the United States remains unchanged.

This approach reflects a joint view of the Soviet leadership and enjoys a full support of the entire people of our country.

In conducting our foreign policy we will continue persistent efforts with the aim of strengthening the peace and lessening the danger of war. We will stand for a peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, will seek to develop an equal and mutually advantageous cooperations with all countries, if they are ready, on their part, to do likewise. This, of course, applies, in full measure to the United States, too.

In practical terms, this means also that our positions laid down, in particular in our message to you of January 28, remain in force. Therein, we clearly expressed our view as to the present state of affairs concerning the issues of nuclear weapons in Europe and in the area of strategic weapons, as well as with regard to the arms limitation and reduction process as a whole. We are expecting your reaction.

I would like, Mr. President, that you and I should have a clear understanding from the very beginning on the central

matters of the relations between the USSR and the USA. These are the matters of security. The Soviet Union does not seek a military superiority, nor does it seek to dictate its will to others, but we will, of course, be safeguarding the interests of our security and those of our allies and friends from any attempts to damage those interests.

I believe, you will agree that in a nuclear age we must not allow the irreparable to take place, be it through design or mistake. We are not seeking a confrontation with the U.S. Such a confrontation would hardly be in the interests of your country, either. If you and I have a common understanding on this point, then it should be put into effect also in practical deeds.

From this standpoint it is important that restraint be exercised in everything, in matters big and small, and that both sides display the high degree of responsibility which is required by the interests of international security and stability. As a minimum, it is necessary to do nothing in the practical policy, that could exacerbate the situation and cause irreversible changes in Soviet-American relations as well as in the international situation as a whole.

We are convinced that it is impossible to begin to correct the present abnormal and, let's face it, dangerous situation, and to speak seriously of constructive moves, if there is a continuation of attempts to upset the balance of forces and to gain military advantages to the detriment of the security of the other side, if actions are taken prejudicing the legitimate interests of the other side.

There is another important point which the U.S. leadership must clearly understand: not only the U.S. has allies and friends. The Soviet Union has them too; and we will be caring for them.

We look at things realistically and have no illusions that it is possible to carry on business in total abstraction from the objective differences which exist between a socialist country and a capitalist country.

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For instance, our morality does not accept much of what is endemic to the capitalist society and what we consider as unfair to people. Nevertheless, we do not introduce these problems into the sphere of interstate relationship. Just as we believe it is wrong and even dangerous to subordinate our relations to ideological differences.

These are the considerations of a general nature which I thought necessary to convey to you. As to the specific areas where the Soviet Union and the U.S. could, right now and with no time lost, move in a constructive way, those have been outlined by us, including in the message that I mentioned. I would like to expect that a positive reaction on your part will follow.

We have always been resolute advocates of a serious and meaningful dialogue - a dialogue that would be aimed at searching for common ground, at finding concrete and mutually acceptable solutions in those areas where it proves realistically possible.

In conclusion I will emphasize once again: a turn toward even and good relations between our two countries has been and continues to be our desire. And such a turn is quite feasible, given the same desire on the U.S. side.

Sincerely,

K.CHERNENKO

Moscow,
The Kremlin