

Soviet note delivered
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In my television address of May 14, I touched upon the main conclusions that we believe can be drawn from the accident at Chernobyl. Today I wish to share with you some additional thoughts on this matter.

It is quite obvious that there is a practical need to begin establishing without delay an international system for the safe development of nuclear energy. Such a system would be directed toward reducing to an absolute minimum the possibility of the peaceful atom causing harm to people. Guaranteeing the reliable, safe development of nuclear energy should become the universal, international obligation of each and every state.

Preliminary steps in this direction are already being taken, including those by the IAEA. Individual states are setting forth various ideas and proposals. We are giving them careful consideration.

I should like to say at the outset that we do not claim to possess ready-made solutions. A total of 152 accidents at atomic power stations involving the release of radioactivity have been recorded throughout the world; thus, a number of states have experience in this area, and an international system for nuclear safety should be worked out on the basis of this experience.

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Of course, the first thing we need is a system of prompt notification in the event of accidents and malfunctions at nuclear power plants when such occurrences are accompanied by the release of radiation. The notification is also connected with the problem of obtaining data when there are possible deviations in levels of natural background radioactivity.

Many states are unable to cope with a nuclear accident with their own resources. Therefore, we believe that it is vital that an international system for safe development of nuclear energy include an efficient mechanism for providing mutual assistance as quickly as possible when dangerous situations arise. Both the IAEA and the World Health Organization could contribute to such a mechanism. Any efforts to eliminate the consequences of a nuclear accident should involve not only the state in whose territory it occurred but also other states, if their assistance is requested.

There is also the question of the legal form of agreements concerning the system of notification and the mechanism for providing assistance. It seems to us that the relevant obligations of states could be set forth and stipulated in a special international convention or conventions. The Soviet side is presently considering all these questions and, taking into account the proposals of other states, will submit its ideas on this subject.

Some states, while agreeing to this solution of the problem, have asked that pending a convention, a decision be reached as early as June regarding the establishment in the IAEA of a system of notification in the event of a nuclear accident. Well, the sooner we can take appropriate measures--even if they are of a preliminary, temporary nature--the better.

At the same time, we think our main task is to take measures which would guarantee the prevention of accidents. This can be done by submitting information to the IAEA on the causes of accidents as expeditiously as is practically feasible. Such information would be studied by appropriate specialists to help the IAEA member countries take into account the given experience for the purpose of further increasing the safety of nuclear energy.

Further steps ought to be taken as well, such as formulating recommendations in the IAEA on the safety of nuclear power plants, and strengthening national and, where necessary, international controls to enforce them in all states. The leading nuclear countries could also be made to cooperate, under IAEA auspices, in creating a new generation of economical and reliable reactors that will be safer to operate than the existing reactors.

We must also take into account the fact that the financial and psychological damages resulting from accidents at nuclear power plants and installations have not been studied adequately on an international scale. We believe that these matters must be properly regulated to prevent and eliminate attempts to use nuclear accidents to exacerbate tensions and foment distrust in relations between states.

I think that the problem of standardizing the permissible levels of radiation adopted by various countries deserves further study.

Nor should we overlook another aspect of nuclear safety--prevention of nuclear terrorism. One cannot help but be concerned about the acts of sabotage committed against nuclear power facilities in the West. There were thirty-two incidents of sabotage in the United States between 1974 and 1984, and ten such incidents in Europe between 1966 and 1977. The inadequacy of measures to prevent the theft of highly enriched fissionable material is also a cause for concern. This however, is far from an exhaustive list of the possibilities that terrorist have. In light of these facts, we think the time has come to work out a reliable system of measures to prevent nuclear terrorism in all its manifestations.

In establishing an international system for the safe development of nuclear energy we can use the available

resources of various international agencies--the IAEA, the World Health Organization, UNEP, the World Meteorological Organization, and the United Nations. All this must be placed on a permanent basis of broad international cooperation.

The IAEA should of course be the main link in this system. Therefore it would be advisable to enlarge the role and responsibilities of this agency. Obviously it will be necessary to increase its financial and material capabilities for this purpose. This problem could be resolved, for example, by allocating special mandatory contributions from the interested member states of the agency. Some thought might also be given to creating a special fund in IAEA for providing emergency assistance in the event of a nuclear accident for those countries which may require it.

On May 14 I suggested already that a high-level international conference be convened in Vienna, under the auspices of the IAEA, to discuss all these issues.

I should like to tell you that we are taking concrete steps to improve the work of the USSR State Committee for Safety in the Atomic Power Industry, which was established several years ago. We intend to expand its ties with the corresponding international organizations as well as with similar national agencies in order to exchange experience in regulating the safe development of nuclear energy.

Let me also add that we are making a thorough analysis of our nuclear energy program, and are working on and shall implement measures to increase the operational safety of nuclear power plants, on the basis of the conclusions we have drawn from the Chernobyl accident.

I should like to emphasize once more that the lessons learned from this accident should benefit all mankind. What occurred at Chernobyl serves as a serious reminder of the terrible forces contained in the energy of the atom. If an accident at a peaceful nuclear power plant turned into a disaster, one can imagine the tragic consequences for all mankind that would result from the use of nuclear weapons, which exist precisely for the purpose of destruction and annihilation.

The nuclear-space age requires new political thinking and new policies from the leaders of all countries. These inexorably severe demands are met by the program proposed by us for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the creation of a comprehensive system of international security.

Ever since the appearance of nuclear weapons, the best minds have pondered how to recork the nuclear jinni. But in the meantime the nuclear arms race has intensified. Where is the key, the decisive link with which the nuclear problem can be resolved? The cessation of nuclear testing could become the first practical step toward nuclear disarmament. We attach great

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importance to this measure, for it is quite effective and easy to implement. Simply stop nuclear testing--under strict controls, of course. This measure should finally become a reality of international life.

By extending its unilateral ban on nuclear explosions, the Soviet Union has agreed not to carry them out in essence for an entire year. We believe that such a protracted period of time should prove more than enough for the American side to thoroughly weigh the situation and take equivalent measures that will make it possible to end nuclear testing on a bilateral basis.

In view of the extraordinary aspect of the problem of stopping nuclear testing, I have repeated my offer to President Reagan to hold a meeting without delay and come to an agreement on a nuclear test ban.

Both these tasks--the safeguarding of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and freeing our planet from nuclear weapons--require broad international interaction and the joint efforts of all states and particularly of international nuclear agencies and public entities interested in creating a comprehensive and reliable system of international security. This is the concern of all states, severally and jointly. We call upon you to contribute to this important cause, on which depends the preservation of human civilization.

DRAFT ORAL MESSAGE TO GORBACHEV

The President has received the General Secretary's oral statement which was delivered June 1 and welcomes the proposals for international cooperation in dealing with nuclear power plant safety. He has directed that United States Government officials include these constructive proposals in their ongoing study of possible international efforts to improve nuclear power plant safety. He hopes to communicate his detailed views to the General Secretary in the near future.

The President also shares the General Secretary's expressed desire to reduce the size of nuclear arsenals and to find ways to move ultimately to a cessation of nuclear testing and the elimination of nuclear weapons. He hopes, therefore, that the Soviet Union will join the United States in serious negotiations to implement the understandings reached in Geneva last November and to explore ways to verify progressive limitations on nuclear testing, which would move us toward these goals.

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