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Dear Mr. President,

I think you and I were right when last October we arrived at what was virtually a concurring view that our meeting in Reykjavik had been an important landmark along the path towards specific and urgently needed measures to genuinely reduce nuclear arms. Over the past several months the Soviet Union and the United States have made substantial headway in that direction. Today, our two countries stand on the threshold of an important agreement which would bring about--for the first time in history--an actual reduction in nuclear arsenals. Nuclear disarmament being the exceptionally complex matter that it is, the important thing is to take a first step, to clear the psychological barrier which stands between the deeply rooted idea that security hinges on nuclear weapons and an objective perception of the realities of the nuclear world. Then the conclusion is inevitable that genuine security can only be achieved through real disarmament.

We have come very close to that point, and the question now is whether we will take that first step which the peoples of the world are so eagerly awaiting. This is precisely what I would like to discuss at greater length in this letter, being fully aware that not too much time remains for the preparation of the agreement between us. The Reykjavik understandings give us a chance to reach agreement. We are

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facing the dilemma of either rapidly completing an agreement on intermediate- and shorter-range missiles or missing the chance to reach an accord which, as a result of joint efforts, has almost entirely taken shape.

It would probably be superfluous to say that the Soviet Union prefers the first option. In addition to our basic commitment to the goal of abolishing nuclear weapons, which is the point of departure for our policy, we also proceed from the belief that at this juncture of time there appears to be a convergence of the lines of interests of the United States, the Soviet Union, Europe, and the rest of the world. If we fail to take advantage of such a favorable confluence of circumstances, those line will diverge, and who knows when they might converge again. Then we would risk losing time and momentum, with the inevitable consequences of the further militarization of the Earth and the extension of the arms race into space. In this context I agree with the thought you expressed that "the opportunity before us is too great to let pass by."

To use an American phrase, the Soviet Union has gone its mile towards a fair agreement, and even more than a mile. Of course, I am far from asserting that the U.S. side has done nothing to advance the work on intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. We could not have come to the point when the treaty is within reach had the United States not made steps in our direction. And yet, there is still no answer to the question why Washington has hardened its stance in upholding a number of positions which are clearly one-sided and, I would say, contrived. I would ask

you once again to weigh carefully all the factors involved and convey to me your final decision on whether the agreement is to be concluded now or postponed, or even set aside. It is time you and I took a firm stand on this matter.

I further request that you give careful thought to the recent important evolution in our positions on intermediate- and shorter-range missiles, which in effect assures accord. We are ready to conclude an agreement under which neither the United States nor the Soviet Union would have any missiles in those categories.

The implementation of such a decision would be subject to strict reciprocal verification, including, of course, on-site inspections of both the process of the missiles' destruction and the cessation of their production.

I have to say that we are proposing to you a solution which in important aspects is virtually identical with the proposals that were, at various points, put forward by the U.S. side. For that reason in particular, there should be no barriers to reaching an agreement, and the artificial obstacles erected by the U.S. delegation should naturally disappear, which, as I understand, will be facilitated by the decision of the F.R.G. government not to modernize the West German Pershing 1A missiles and to eliminate them. Of course, we have no intention to interfere in U.S. alliance relations, including those with the F.R.G. However, the question of what happens to the U.S. war-heads intended for the West German missiles needs to be clarified.

We are proposing fair and equitable terms for an agreement. Let me say very candidly and without diplomatic niceties: we have in effect opened up the reserves of our positions in order to facilitate an agreement. Our position is clear and honest: we call for the total elimination of the entire class of missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers and of all warheads for those missiles. The fate of an agreement on intermediate- and shorter-range missiles now depends entirely on the U.S. leadership and on your personal willingness, Mr. President, to conclude a deal. As for our approach, it will be constructive, you can count on that.

If we assume that the U.S. side, proceeding from considerations of equivalent security, will go ahead with the conclusion of the treaty--and this is what we hope is going to happen--then there is no doubt that this will impart a strong impetus to bringing our positions closer together in a very real way on other questions in the nuclear and space area, which are even more important for the security of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. and with which you and I have come to grips after Reykjavik.

What I have in mind specifically are the issues of strategic offensive arms and space. Those are the key issues of security, and our stake in reaching agreement on them is certainly not at all diminished by the fact that we have made headway on intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. What is more, it is this area that is pivotal to the U.S.-Soviet strategic relationship, and hence to the entire course of military-strategic developments in the world.

At the negotiations in Geneva on those questions the delegations, as you know, have started drafting an agreed text of a treaty on strategic offensive arms. The Soviet side is seeking to speed up, to the maximum possible extent, progress in this work and shows its readiness to accommodate the other side and to seek compromise solutions. To reach agreement, however, a reciprocal readiness for compromise is, of course, required on the part of the United States.

Things are not as good with regard to working out agreement on the ABM Treaty regime, on preventing the extension of the arms race into space. Whereas we have submitted a constructive draft agreement that takes into account the U.S. attitude to the question of research on strategic defense, the U.S. side continues to take a rigid stand. However, without finding a mutually acceptable solution to the space problem it will be impossible to reach final agreement on radically reducing strategic offensive arms, which is what you and I spoke about in both Geneva and Reykjavik.

If we are to be guided by a desire to find a fair solution to both these organically interrelated problems, issues relating to space can be resolved. The Soviet Union is ready to make additional efforts to that end. But it is clear that this cannot be done through our efforts alone, if attempts to secure unilateral advantages are not abandoned.

I propose, Mr. President, that necessary steps be taken, in Geneva and through other channels, particularly at a high level, in order to speed up the pace of negotiations so that full-scale agreements could be reached within the next few

months both on the radical reduction of strategic offensive arms and on ensuring strict observance of the ABM Treaty.

If all those efforts were crowned with success we would be able to provide a firm basis for a stable and forward-moving development not just of the Soviet-U.S. relationship but of international relations as a whole for many years ahead. We would leave behind what was, frankly, a complicated stretch in world politics, and you and I would crown in a befitting manner the process of interaction on the central issues of security which began in Geneva.

I think that both of us should not lose sight of other important security issues, where fairly good prospects have now emerged of cooperating for the sake of reaching agreement.

I would like to single out in particular the question of the real opportunities that have appeared for solving at last the problem of the complete elimination of chemical weapons globally. Granted that the preparation of a convention banning chemical weapons depends not only on the efforts of our two countries, still it is the degree of agreement between our positions that in effect predetermines progress in this matter. It is our common duty to bring this extremely important process to fruition.

If the veneer of polemics is removed from the problem of reducing conventional arms, a common interest will be evident in this area too. This is the interest of stability at a lower level of arms, which can be achieved through substantial reductions in armed forces and armaments, through removing

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the existing asymmetries and imbalances. Accordingly, we have fairly good prospects of working together to draw up a mutually acceptable mandate for negotiations on conventional arms. The Vienna meeting would thus become a major stage in terms of a military dimension, in addition to the economic, human and other dimensions.

One more consideration: we believe that the time has come to remove the cloak of dangerous secrecy from the military doctrines of the two alliances, of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. In this process of giving greater transparency to our military guidelines, meetings of military officials at the highest level could also play a useful role.

Does it not seem paradoxical to you, Mr. President, that we have been able to bring our positions substantially closer together in an area where the nerve knots of our security are located and yet we have been unable so far to find a common language on another important aspect, namely, regional conflicts? Not only do they exacerbate the international situation, they often bring our relations to a pitch of high tension. In the meantime, in the regions concerned--whether in Asia, which is increasingly moving to the forefront of international politics, the Near East or Central America--encouraging changes are now under way, reflecting a search for a peaceful settlement. I have in mind, in particular, the growing desire for national reconciliation. This should be given careful attention and, I believe, encouragement and support.

As you can see, the Soviet leadership once again reaffirms its strong intention to build Soviet-U.S. relations in a constructive and businesslike spirit. Time may flow particularly fast for those relations, and we should treat it as something extremely precious. We are in favor of making full use of Eduard Shevardnadze's visit to Washington to find practical solutions to key problems. In the current situation this visit assumes increased importance. Our foreign minister is ready for detailed discussions with U.S. leaders on all questions, including ways of reaching agreement on problems under discussion in Geneva and the prospects and possible options for developing contacts at the summit level. He has all necessary authority with regard to that.

I want to emphasize that, as before, I am personally in favor of actively pursuing a businesslike and constructive dialogue with you.

Sincerely,

M. GORBACHEV