

*I think this calls
for a very well thought
out reply & not just
a routine acknowledgement
that leaves the status quo as is.*

Unofficial translation

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

RR

March 19, 1984

Dear Mr. President,

I have carefully read your letter of March 6. And I am responding to it also taking into account the additional comments made by your Ambassador in the conversation with A.A.Gromyko and by Secretary George Shultz to our Ambassador in Washington.

In doing so, I intend to address the main issues of a principled nature, as some clarifications in greater detail will be given to the Secretary of State by our Ambassador who is receiving appropriate instructions to this effect. I also assume that you are already familiar with the views which were expressed on our side by A.A.Gromyko in the said conversation with Ambassador Hartman.

First of all, I would like to emphasize that, like yourself, I value the importance of our correspondence which makes possible a direct exchange of views on the cardinal problems of relations between our countries and the international situation.

In this regard I would like to note two points in your letter: the stated desire to improve relations between the USSR and US and your concurrence that specific measures are required to that end.

It is precisely from this perspective that I wish to express our considerations on the questions you raised and

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explain the way we see the possibility for a constructive turn ✓
in Soviet-American relations, considering the special role and
responsibility of our countries in international affairs.

I, too, am not in favor of engaging in our correspondence in
mutual recriminations, and this is not my purpose. At the same
time it is obviously difficult to hope to move forward while
not remaining on the ground of reality. In other words, we assess
and will continue to assess the intentions of the United States
first of all by the practical policy it pursued and currently
pursues, by concrete positions the U.S. side maintains on the
security issues. And, frankly speaking, so far we have seen no ✓
encouraging signs in this regard.

Having initiated the deployment of its missiles in Western
Europe, the United States is, thereby, creating an additional
strategic threat to the Soviet Union. It is impossible for us ✓
to ignore it. This step has become the main obstacle on the path
of negotiations, it has undermined in general the process of li-
miting and reducing nuclear arms.

From your letter it does not transpire at all that the
United States is prepared to remove that obstacle and deal on
the only possible basis of equality and equal security. From
the explanations provided by the Secretary of State it follows
all too clear that there are no changes in the U.S. position
either on the strategic or "European" nuclear arms. The essence,
and details, too, of this position are sufficiently known to us;
any additional "clarifications", in whatever form they are offered
official or unofficial - will not of themselves help in this
matter and will not be able to change our view of this uncon-
structive position.

I would like you, Mr. President, to have a correct
understanding of this. Attempts to somehow sidestep the deadlock
will not be productive. But, we are convinced, there is a way
out of the obtaining situation. Our view of what that way should be
is known to you. I believe there is no need to state again in
specific terms our position in this regard.

I would like to hope that your government will be able to take a broad and long-term view of this matter and will draw conclusions which would make it possible to give an impetus to the solution of the problem of nuclear arms - a central problem, as you recognize, in our relations.

We are for solving this problem in a most radical manner, with no detriment, of course, to the security of either side, while maintaining the existing balance of forces and strengthening the strategic stability.

I would like to point out in this connection that the development of large-scale ABM systems would be in direct contradiction with the objectives of strengthening stability - and you in your letter speak in favor of strengthening stability. It is not that the Soviet Union has some sort of a special concern in this regard. The United States must be concerned about it to an equal degree. After all, the inescapable consequence of the implementation of such plans can be only one thing - an arms race in all directions whose magnitude it is difficult even to imagine today. What is needed is not the negotiations on what such systems might be, but a resolute and unequivocal renunciation of the very idea of creating such systems. A clear and unambiguous stand in this regard would prove to be also a weighty reaffirmation of the commitment of our two countries to the Treaty on the limitation of ABM systems which is of unlimited duration and which is an important element in the package of the existing limitations in the area of strategic arms.

The policy of the Soviet Union - which with all due force was emphasized in my speech of March 2 that you mention - has been and will continue to be oriented in a practical way toward a cessation of the arms race and not toward transferring that race into new areas, toward specific agreements leading to a real reduction of the war danger and strengthening the security for all peoples.

In furtherance of the views set forth in the said speech and with account taken of the interest that, as I understand, you expressed in your letter, we propose that the USSR and U.S. undertake on a priority basis the following:

1. Initiate without delay - making a public announcement to this effect - a concrete discussion aimed at reaching an agreement on the prevention of the militarization of space and the prohibition of the use of force in outer space and from outer space against the Earth. We are prepared to conduct such negotiations at the level of specially appointed delegations and at the beginning stage through diplomatic channels if the U.S. side finds it more convenient.

Without prejudging the outcome of this issue at the present time, one might, as a practical matter, proceed on the understanding that initially such an agreement would include the relevant obligations of the USSR and U.S., laying at the same time a basis for working out a broad international agreement, a draft of which could, by our mutual consent, be submitted, for instance, for consideration at the Geneva disarmament conference.

The question of anti-satellite weapons would then be solved either in the framework of such bilateral discussions on the general problem of the prevention of space militarization or as a major separate step leading in this direction.

2. Make, jointly or in parallel, a statement on the intention of the USSR and U.S. to implement the idea of nuclear weapons freeze and on their readiness to begin in this regard a meaningful exchange of views on the matter. The subject of such a discussion could be possible forms of freeze accord (a bilateral agreement, unilaterally taken obligations), the scope thereof, etc.

3. Resume, in agreement with the British government, the trilateral negotiations on the complete and general ban of nuclear weapon tests. We believe that, given the goodwill, it would be possible to count here on rapid progress, considering a substantial amount of positive work done at the previous stage of the negotiations.

4. You know, Mr. President, that in my speech of March 2 I spoke in favor of having the nuclear powers adhere in their mutual relations to certain norms. This would meet the urgent requirements of the present day and help create such a climate

that would raise the level of trust in international affairs, thereby facilitating the prevention of nuclear war and curbing of the arms race.

There is no doubt that the incorporation of such norms into the practice of Soviet-American relations would bring about a qualitative change in these relations and place them on a secure and stable basis.

We expect the United States to give a most serious consideration to this initiative and respond to it in a positive way.

Mr. President, we have taken note of what you said with regard to the questions of chemical weapons and the Vienna negotiations. In this regard, too, we maintain positions that are constructive and far-reaching. We will, of course, give a careful study to the promised U.S. proposals when they appear at the negotiating table. It is important, though, not to repeat the past unproductive experience, if there is a genuine desire to solve those issues that have been long outstanding.

We hope that positive results will be achieved at the Stockholm conference. We regard confidence-building measures as a large-scale political problem requiring, also, appropriate major decisions. In Stockholm it is not only proper, but necessary, too, to negotiate agreements on the no-first use of nuclear weapons and on the non-use of force in general. Equally, we are for implementing other measures which should be directed precisely at building confidence and which should not pursue some different objectives.

I would like to see the U.S. side being prepared to act in such a manner. It would undoubtedly contribute to a success in the work of the Stockholm conference.

You mention regional problems. I think the developments of the past years have shown graphically that the absence of interaction between our countries has a negative impact also on the settlement of regional problems and, accordingly, on the general situation in the world.

The main thing in such interaction is that each side be guided by broad interests of peace and not seek benefits for itself at the expense of the interests of others. I am sure that an exchange of views between the USSR and U.S. on relevant regional problems in such a context would undoubtedly be useful.

You will recall that in the course of the previous correspondence readiness was expressed on our part to jointly intensify the search for ways leading to an overall political settlement in the Middle East. Today, too, we continue to be ready for it. In this regard there definitely exists a subject matter for an exchange of views. I am confident that, acting in such a manner, our two countries would in a practical way contribute to the relaxation of the continuing dangerous military and political tension in that region, which would also have broader positive results.

As to the question of the Iran-Iraq war, that you touched upon, you will recall that the Soviet Union from the very outbreak of that war has been consistently coming out - also in the contacts with the leadership of Iran and Iraq - in favor of putting an end to the senseless bloodshed. We have supported the activities of the mediating missions and the political efforts of the UN. The USSR intends to continue to act in the same spirit. In this regard we ourselves have done nothing - and we believe that other countries should act likewise - that can additionally exacerbate the situation and induce the parties to the conflict to take even more dangerous actions the consequences of which would go beyond the immediate area of the conflict. This first of all concerns any demonstrations of military nature, no matter what pretexts are being used for carrying them out.

In conclusion I would like to touch briefly on the area of bilateral relations between our countries. We have always been and remain to be advocates of active and really meaningful ties in a variety of fields, mutually beneficial and equal ties. The experience of a relatively recent past shows that this is possible.

If the U.S. side is truly ready at the present time to correct the abnormal situation that has developed in our bilateral relations as a result of its actions, it could be a welcome thing. We will judge if such a readiness is there by the practical steps the U.S. side will be taking in furtherance of the general concepts contained in your letter. We are instructing our Ambassador in Washington to discuss in greater detail these questions with the Secretary of State.

Sincerely,

K.CHERNENKO

Moscow

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Ambassador's oral remarks

PR

First. In Moscow a careful consideration has been given alongside with the President's letter to what was said by you, Mr. Secretary, in the conversation on March 7. In the course of that conversation a broad range of questions was addressed with regard to Soviet-American relations. Regretably, you, Mr. Secretary, in your comments confined yourself, in fact, to the statements of a general nature within the framework of the already known positions of the U.S. side.

One has to state that from those statements no real movement can be perceived in the positions of the U.S. in the direction of putting Soviet-American relations on a steadier course. Indeed, one cannot take for a constructive approach stated readiness of the U.S. side "not to object to continue to listen to additional arguments" of the Soviet side or to expect the Soviet side to come up with some new initiatives in matters whose solution has been blocked by actions of the U.S. Such an approach is in no conformity with the statements in favor of setting up business-like discussions.

Second. Whether or not the administration really intends to work for correcting the relations between our countries, we judge and will continue to judge not by words, not by declarations, but by specific actions.

Let us take an important question of principle in our relations. Recently, we have found ourselves being intensively persuaded that the United States allegedly is not striving for military superiority and does not wish to create a threat to our security. But this does not square at all with the U.S. official concepts and programs in the military area. Quite tangible material things are involved here. We are witnessing a build-up of the U.S. forward based forces, including nuclear forces, along the perimeter of our country which is continuing and getting even more active. We also know the tempo of the general military build-up that is going on in the United States

and the scope of appropriations allocated for that purpose. Given all this, mere verbal assurances sound unconvincing.

Such is the reality on the basis of which we draw one conclusion - the U.S. is not giving up attempts to assume domineering positions in world affairs. We will resist it in a most resolute fashion, we will not permit the military balance to be upset.

Third. Our position of principle on the issues concerning the limitation of nuclear arms - both offensive and defensive - was presented in an exhaustive way in the letter of K.U.Chernenko and the conversation of A.A.Gromyko with Ambassador Hartman.

Forth. We proceed on the assumption that the U.S. side will give a careful and constructive study to our proposals regarding the priority steps which should be taken for the purpose of a genuine reduction of the military threat.

The question of preventing the militarization of space is an acutely urgent question. Otherwise, a very dangerous situation is to develop. The issue of anti-satellite weapons is one of the important elements of this problem. It is futile for the U.S. side to try to allege that it will find itself in an unequal position, should it agree to ban such weapons. This is not so. We propose that an agreement be reached not only to prohibit the development of new anti-satellite systems, but also to eliminate the already existing systems of such kind. Thus, we have in mind a truly radical and equal approach, whereby, the problems of verification, too, would be much easier to solve. The desire of the Soviet side to find a mutually acceptable solution is convincingly manifest in the fact that the Soviet Union has initiated a unilateral moratorium on launching into space any types of anti-satellite weapons. It was a clear signal, and the fact that the U.S. side has so far not responded to it in a proper way tells us a lot. However, it is not yet too late to stop, and our proposals open up a path to the solution of the question of anti-satellite weapons equitable to both sides.

We believe a freeze to be a real means to put an end to the process of a quantitative and qualitative build-up of nuclear weapons. The arguments put forward by the U.S. side against such a step, the doubts it expresses in this regard are not convincing either on their merits or in relation to the result that the implementation of that idea would lead to. In the course of the proposed discussions we could present additional considerations in order to spell out further specifics of our position.

We are raising the need to resume the trilateral negotiations on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear tests in the belief that an agreement on this subject could be a weighty indicator of the intentions to work for ceasing the rivalry in the development of nuclear weapons.

The same purpose would be served also by the ratification of the known treaties of 1974 and 1976. Currently the U.S. side is justifying its position with regard to those treaties by the alleged "imperfection" of the mechanism of verification contained therein, although this mechanism has not been so far tried in practice. It is just as unconvincing as the earlier made assertion according to which the ratification of these treaties would have impeded the trilateral negotiations or the ratification of the SALT-2 Treaty. Indeed, treaties are signed in order to be put into force and to be operative and not to be covered with dust on the shelves.

Fifth. To implement the important idea of principle put forward in the speech by K.U.Chernenko on March 2, with regard to the need that the relations between nuclear states be governed by a set of certain norms, we are prepared to begin discussing this matter first of all between the USSR and U.S., as the most powerful nuclear states bearing a special responsibility for maintaining the international security. We are ready to conduct an exchange on this subject with a view to achieving an appropriate agreement in this regard.

Sixth. The issues of the prohibition of chemical weapons, the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe, and

confidence-building measures are being considered at multilateral fora. The interests of ensuring forward movement at those negotiations would be served by employing also a method of bilateral Soviet-American consultations which can be usefully conducted both in the capitals and in the venues of those fora.

Seventh. As to the question raised by the U.S. side regarding consultations between military representatives of the USSR and U.S., it is impossible to regard this question out of the context of the general situation in our relations. Should there be positive changes in the nature of Soviet-American relations, the usefulness of such consultations, too, could be considered.

Eighth. As a matter of principle, the Soviet side is for having talks on regional problems when it proves necessary and when the purpose is to achieve a settlement of conflict situations with account taken of the interests of all parties. To put it briefly, we are for constructive interaction, and, by the way, we have with the United States a rather positive experience of such cooperation.

There is yet another side of this matter: the interaction becomes effective when it is reinforced by mutual restraint. This is true of all situations fraught with conflict or a dangerous flare-up. The recent developments, including those in the Middle East and in Central America, have shown that attempts to use forceful methods and a direct armed intervention aggravate both the situation in those regions and the overall situation in the world.

In connection with the Iran-Iraq conflict we would like to emphasize the following: the actions of the U.S. in the Persian Gulf area, the threats to use military force there, to put it bluntly, exacerbate the situation even further. The Soviet Union believes that no obstacles should be created to the freedom of navigation, including that in the Strait of Hormuz. But to be sure, no one has the right to arrogate to himself the role of some sort of a traffic policeman over international lines of communication.

Nineth. The approach of principle that the USSR maintains regarding the bilateral relations with the U.S. has been repeatedly made known to the U.S. side, also in connection with the specific questions it raised.

We want to see the affairs in that area proceed in a normal, steady fashion, rather than be determined by some expedient considerations. The determining factor here must be the mutual interest of the sides.

The Soviet side is for reinvigorating the existing agreements between the two countries, for revitalizing those of them which have become paralyzed. And, of course, if we do have agreements, they must be implemented to the full extent, and not partially or selectively. It is not so much a matter of formality here, say, of the level the contacts are carried out on. The main thing is to have normal contacts, beneficial to each side.

There is, of course, a number of agreements (on the World ocean study, fisheries, preventing incidents on the high seas, facilitating economic, industrial and technical cooperation) which are expiring this year. We would like to have a clarification as to what the U.S. side means saying that it is prepared "to review seriously" these agreements. At any rate, one can hardly regard as displaying a constructive approach the formal extension of agreements which in fact are devoid of real content.

Improvement of the hotline. This is a concrete technical question discussed by the experts of the two countries. We are waiting from the U.S. side for the promised technical proposals regarding the introduction of a facsimile communication facility. Such proposals will be studied, whereupon we shall be able to present our views as to the timing of the next round of negotiations.

We believe that the U.S. side has now a clearer understanding of our position on the delimitation of the sea areas and continental shelf in the Chuckchee and Bering Seas and in the Arctic and Pacific Oceans. We continue to be in favor of resolving these issues - in an equitable way in accordance with the sides'

legitimate interests and rights. The announcement by the U.S. side that sea bottom areas are open for bidding in the regions which are a subject of the Soviet-American negotiations, runs in direct contradiction to such a solution. This is yet another example of how the practical steps of the U.S. do not square with its declared readiness to improve Soviet-American relations.

We shall be drawing appropriate conclusions from the further conduct of the U.S. side in this matter and will see whether it will refrain from actions which would seriously complicate the on-going negotiations.

Consular negotiations. We are for continuing those and we shall be ready to look at questions which can be discussed in that area.

With regard to Consulates-General in Kiev and New-York there have already been quite a few zigzags on the U.S. side. We shall study what the U.S. has to say this time on this subject in order to ascertain what the intentions are in this regard. The very existence of consular offices, of course, their functions have nothing symbolic about them, they serve a practical purpose in dealing with certain questions of bilateral relations, in safeguarding the interests of the citizens of the country represented by a Consulate-General. Accordingly, whether the work of a consular office is effective depends directly on the state of affairs in various areas of relations between the countries, including those in the field of transport and communications.

For that reason, the resumption of the Aeroflot flights to the U.S. has an important practical significance for the effectiveness of the work of our Consulate-General in New-York. Incidentally, in a direct practical way, it applies also to the question of all kinds of exchanges, including those in the cultural field. Obviously, each side in carrying out such exchanges has a right to choose at its own discretion the air-lines it finds most suitable also in terms of convenience and financial considerations. For the Soviet side this again is the question of Aeroflot

flights, and we proceed on the assumption that the U.S. side will take a positive decision in this respect.

Taking into account the intention expressed by the U.S. side, we are prepared to discuss questions related to negotiating a general agreement on contacts and exchanges, including cultural exchanges. At the same time we proceed on the assumption that the American side should resolve the problem of a principle nature, that of securing proper conditions for the stay in the U.S. of Soviet participants in such exchanges, which otherwise cannot be carried out in a normal way.

Well, indeed, it is high time for the U.S. authorities to take, after all, effective measures to ensure the safety and normal conditions for Soviet offices and citizens in the U.S. What is required here is an elementary observance of generally recognized norms in relations among states, and it must be done. Failure to take appropriate measures would have most serious consequences, and the statements by the U.S. side regarding its readiness to improve relations would remain an empty phrase.