

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 2, 1984

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Your letter of June 6 deals with a number of issues which I would like to pursue after careful deliberation, but I wish to take the opportunity provided by Ambassador Dobrynin's return to Moscow to give you my thoughts on the proposal your government made June 29 for a conference in Vienna in September regarding the "militarization of outer space."

First, let me say that I believe your proposal for a conference is an excellent idea. I am prepared to have a delegation in Vienna September 18. I would observe that the date and location is of less importance than our agreement to begin serious discussions of ways arms competition can be slowed and the risk of nuclear war reduced.

Let me describe my concept of the way a useful conference might be organized. I believe that each of our delegations should be free to raise questions of concern to its side which are relevant to the overall topic. However, these should not be raised merely for the sake of exposition and debate, but with a clear mandate to seek out and find mutually acceptable negotiating approaches which hold promise for concrete results.

I have studied the position you have taken regarding the resumption of negotiations on nuclear arms. Even though I cannot agree with your reasons, I am not asking you to change that position in order to start discussions. But inasmuch as strategic and intermediate-range nuclear weapons systems are the most lethal systems and are intimately associated with those other space weapons on which you propose to negotiate, it is clear that it will be difficult to move very far in solving some of the problems without addressing the others. It would,

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therefore, be difficult to understand a refusal even to discuss ways that negotiations on nuclear systems might be resumed. As I have pointed out to you several times, I have a number of ideas as to how these problems might be resolved to the advantage of both our countries. I believe that it is in our mutual interest to resolve our current impasse on offensive nuclear weapons.

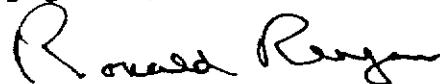
Regarding the other space weapons referred to in your proposal, I am optimistic that we can find significant aspects of anti-satellite weaponry which could be a fruitful object for negotiations. In sum, I am agreeable to a conference without preconditions of any sort, but one based on a commitment by both of us to find mutually acceptable negotiating approaches to the important questions before us.

You spoke in your last letter about the necessity of dealing with each other as equals. Naturally, I agree, and I believe the approach I have outlined for a conference embodies this principle in both form and spirit. As we have both often observed, it is time for deeds. Finding ways to make progress on the central issues I have outlined would be a deed for which the whole world would thank us.

Of course, we need not wait until a conference is organized to discuss the issues before us. I will be pleased to continue our discussion of these and related topics, on a confidential basis, both in our correspondence and through our respective representatives.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to receiving your thoughts on these matters. It is my earnest hope that you will join me in seizing the opportunity we have to make a major step toward improving relations between our countries and creating a safer world for all.

Sincerely yours,



His Excellency  
Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko  
Chairman of the Presidium of the  
Supreme Soviet of the Union of  
Soviet Socialist Republics  
Moscow

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- I think that you gathered last night a first-hand sense of the President's seriousness about getting substantive arms control talks moving forward.
- He carefully studied Mr. Chernenko's last letter and has prepared this letter today in reply. It does not try to address all of the issues between us, but concentrates on a problem Mr. Chernenko focused on--what he called the "militarization of outer space."
- The President confirms what we indicated to your Embassy last Friday night. We accept your proposal of earlier that day to meet September 18 in Vienna.
- As we have indicated in our statement on Friday, the militarization of space began when the ballistic missiles were tested and when such missiles and other weapons systems using outer space began to be deployed.
- We have noted what you wish to discuss in Vienna. We will be prepared to address those issues. We have identified issues we plan to raise as well.
- As the President notes in his letter, we anticipate that we will come to Vienna with constructive suggestions both on the question of resuming negotiations on offensive nuclear systems and on negotiating approaches to ASAT limitations.
- I wish to make one point very clear: contrary to initial press commentary, we have set no preconditions for these talks in September.
- The U.S. and Soviet Union need not agree to any common agenda on those talks. The U.S. is prepared to meet at the time and place the Soviet Union has proposed, and to address the issues the Soviet Union has proposed, in addition to which, the U.S. side will raise other issues.
- The U.S. believes that it is important to consult privately on more detailed preparations and groundwork for this meeting in order to assure that it is fruitful.
- As the President has indicated, we see this meeting as a valuable opportunity for businesslike and constructive exchanges through which we might work out mutually acceptable approaches to arms control negotiations. We are serious about using this opportunity to make progress.

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- Thus, we are prepared to refrain from any further public comment on these discussions if you will do the same. Our preference is to pursue this question quietly through private diplomatic channels.
- I would further note that on several recent occasions, the Soviet Government has stated that the upcoming U.S. Presidential election has no bearing on its policies in this regard. I can confirm to you the same holds true for us. As the President's letter indicates, if the Soviet side wishes to hold these talks after the election in late November or December as opposed to September, that is acceptable to us as well.
- I hope that in your consultations in Moscow, you will personally underscore the seriousness and positive manner in which we are seeking to handle your proposal.

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