

Unofficial translation

His Excellency

Ronald W. Reagan

The President of the United States of America FILE F99-051 * 313

Washington, D.C.

BY Jan, NARA, DATE 10/16/00
December 20, 1984

Dear Mr. President;

First of all I would like to express gratification with regard to the agreement reached between the USSR and USA to enter into negotiation on nuclear and outer space arms.

The meeting between Andrei A. Gromyko and George Shultz set for January 7-8 is to play an important role in putting these negotiations on track as a practical matter.

An opportunity is opening now both for the straightening out of Soviet-American relations and the improving of the international situation as a whole. This opportunity should not be lost.

Recently you have spoken on more than one occasion, also in your letters of November 16 and December 7 and earlier in your conversation with Andrei A. Gromyko, in favor of moving along the road leading eventually to the liquidation of nuclear weapons, completely and everywhere. We, of course, welcome that. The Soviet Union, as is known, as far back as the dawn of the nuclear age came out for prohibiting and liquidating such weapons. We also made specific proposals as to how it could be achieved. At that time, given the goodwill on the part of the US, it would have been, of course, much easier, than it is now, to resolve the task of liquidating nuclear weapons. But even today it is not yet too late to start practical movement toward this noble objective.

To continue the accumulation of nuclear weapons, to multiply their types and kinds, to expand the arms race to new spheres - means moving away from the said objective rather than nearing it. What is required is different - to reduce on a mutual basis the nuclear weapons, to block securely all the channels of the arms race and to forego forever futile attempts to seek unilateral advantages.

The forthcoming new negotiations which will encompass both the issue of the non-militarization of outer space and the questions of the strategic arms and medium range nuclear systems in Europe, can and, we are convinced, must become a major step along this road. There exists between those weapons an organic relationship which requires to have a comprehensive approach to discussing and resolving the relevant issues.

In my letter to you of November 17 I noted the objective fact that the key link in this whole chain is the question of strike space weapons, and to be more precise, the question of neither side having such weapons. To be quite frank: emergence and deployment of strike space systems would make it impossible to conduct serious negotiations on the limitation and reduction of strategic arms.

What is involved here is precisely this kind of relationship between these issues. And I must say clearly that the statements coming from the White House, and in the most recent days, too, with respect to the intention to continue the implementation of the earlier announced space plans regardless of the negotiations, are not encouraging at all. Quite to the contrary.

It depends on the outcome of the Geneva meeting of the Ministers whether from the outset a constructive orientation will be given to the negotiations on nuclear and outer space arms. In other words, whether they will be given correct guidelines in the form of an agreed understanding of the subject and objectives of those negotiations.

Andrei A. Gromyko will be prepared to conduct a substantive discussion with Secretary of State George Shultz of all the questions pertaining to the task set before them. That will require, of course, addressing also the content, in principle, of those questions, while their detailed consideration will, naturally, be the task of the negotiations that will follow.

It is important that such negotiations begin without unjustified delays and without unnecessary intermediate stages, and the main thing is that both sides have constructive positions at the negotiations themselves. This is precisely our approach.

In connection with the thought contained in your letters, Mr. President, regarding the desirability of a more intensive dialogue between our two countries on regional problems, I would like to reaffirm that the Soviet Union is in favor of looking jointly for peaceful ways to a just resolution of the existing international, including regional, problems. Our countries can - we are convinced of that - interact with benefit for themselves and for other peoples, in the interests of removing the dangerous hotbeds of tension and of preventing the emergence of such new hotbeds in various regions of the world. In such context we are prepared to exchange views at various levels both on the Middle East and other regional problems.

Quite consonant with our intentions is also your statement in favor of revitalizing belateral Soviet-American relations, including the resumption of the work of the joint commissions on cooperation in various economic scientific and cultural fields, which were set up some time ago. So far only the first steps in this deriction have been taken, but if the artificial obstacles which were put on this road are removed, such cooperation would be of practical benefit to both countries, and, which is no less important, would facilitate the improvement of the relations between them in the political field as well.

In conclusion I would like once again to express the confidence that there exist opportunities for a turn for the better in the relations between the USSR and the USA. To translate those opportunities into reality all is necessary is to have the political will and realistic approach, the willingness to resolve all the issues in the spirit of equality and mutual account of the legitimate interests of the sides. It is all the more so when it comes to the building of confidence, lowering of the level of military confrontation, also in Europe, and, generally, cessation of the arms race and joint steps aimed at strengthening the peace.

Sincerely,

K. CHERNENKO

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

December 21, 1984

SECRET/SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: George P. Shultz *ups*
SUBJECT: Chernenko's Letter of December 20

RR 12/24/84

Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin came in this evening to give me another letter to you from Chairman Chernenko. As you will see from the attached Soviet Embassy translation, its tone is positive and it looks toward the Geneva meeting.

The main substantive point that emerges from the letter is the centrality of space arms control for making headway on arms control generally. Chernenko says that the "emergence and deployment of strike space systems would make it impossible to conduct serious negotiations on the limitation and reduction of strategic arms." I noted to Dobrynin that both you and Chernenko now have talked about the desirability of eliminating nuclear weapons. I added that you take this issue seriously and said that if both sides agreed on this as their goal, this would create a new setting for arms control negotiations. Then I asked if Chernenko is serious about taking "radical steps" to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Dobrynin responded by saying "basically yes." He said the goal is clear, but the road will have to be charted by Gromyko and me in Geneva. He continued that this also raises the question of how the three aspects (space, INF, START) are going to be treated, in particular whether the U.S. is willing to negotiate on outer space or will continue to pursue its "cosmos phantasy."

You will also note in the letter that Chernenko says they are prepared to go ahead with talks on regional issues, and also agrees on the importance in moving ahead on bilateral issues in the relationship as well.

Attachment: December 20, 1984, Letter from Chernenko

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CAS *7/25/00*

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