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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE
STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Letter dated 10 April 1984 from the Permanent Representative of
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the answers given by
K. U. Chernenko, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party
of the Soviet Union, to questions asked by the newspaper Pravda, published on
9 April 1984.

I request you, Sir, to circulate this text as an official document of the
General Assembly under items 65 and 68 of the provisional list.

(Signed) O. TROYANOVSKY

* A/39/50.

ANNEX

Answers given by K. U. Chernenko to questions asked by the
newspaper Pravda

Question. How do you assess the world situation at present? In particular, aren't there any signs of positive changes in the policy of the United States of America?

Answer. The situation in the world, unfortunately, is not improving. It remains very dangerous. This is due to the fact that the United States Administration continues to gamble on military strength, on the attainment of military superiority, on the imposition of its order of things on other peoples. This was confirmed once again by President Reagan's recent speech at Georgetown University.

It is true that peaceful rhetoric is occasionally heard from Washington, but no matter how much we would like to, we cannot detect behind it the slightest signs of a readiness to back up those words with practical action. In other words, the introduction of new words does not mean a new policy.

Let us consider such an essential problem as the halting of the nuclear arms race.

Has the White House perhaps recognized the danger and futility of such a race and begun to display some moderation on that score? Nothing of the sort; on the contrary, there are redoubled efforts in the United States to implement ever newer programmes for the production and deployment of nuclear weapons. The emplacement of United States nuclear weapons is continuing in Western Europe as well. All of this is being done in order to upset the present balance of forces in one way or another.

Such actions are totally incompatible with the task of halting the arms race. And it is no accident that the United States has deliberately undermined the very process of limiting and reducing nuclear weapons and wrecked the talks both on strategic weapons and on nuclear weapons in Europe.

Our contacts with the United States side also show that there have been no positive changes in the United States position on these essential questions.

While persisting in its earlier line, which led to the breaking off of the Geneva talks, and continuing to deploy its missiles in Western Europe, Washington waxes eloquent about its readiness to reopen the talks. But one must ask: talks about what? About just how many missiles and what kind of missiles, aimed at the Soviet Union and at our allies, the United States can deploy in Europe? We shall not engage in talks of that nature.

There is no need to convince us of the usefulness of dialogue and discussion. As soon as the United States and the NATO countries siding with it take steps to restore the situation that existed before the deployment of new United States

missiles in Western Europe began, the Soviet Union will make no objection. That is the real road to talks.

Question. What is the situation in other areas of arms limitation and disarmament?

Answer. Progress in other matters is also being blocked by the United States. Let me talk at length about two or three problems.

First of all, outer space. The Soviet Union has been trying for a number of years to bring about an agreement aimed at preventing the arms race from spreading to outer space. We are constantly placing this question before the United States leadership. The reason we do this is that we realize clearly what dreadful consequences the militarization of space could bring.

On the other hand, a few days ago the President of the United States informed the United States Congress that the Government is embarking on the implementation of a broad arms-race programme in outer space and does not intend to reach any agreement with the Soviet Union for preventing the militarization of outer space, allegedly because of difficulties in verification.

Plainly and bluntly, the United States does not want an agreement, but in a mockery of common sense, it asserts its readiness to talk with us only in order to agree that any agreement on this question is impossible. That is the general view held in Washington about political dialogue and discussion.

Let us take another extremely important question: the prohibition of chemical weapons.

As early as 1972, the USSR and other socialist countries put forward in the Geneva Committee on Disarmament a proposal to conclude a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. At the same time, they submitted a draft of such a convention.

Subsequently, we reverted to this question a number of times, making our proposals more precise and more detailed. But throughout all these years, the United States has blocked the conclusion of a convention on the total prohibition of chemical weapons. It has simply engaged in obstructionism.

Now they have decided in Washington to pose as champions of the prohibition of chemical weapons. For the past few months, United States leaders have been promising to make proposals at Geneva on that subject. But promises are nothing more than promises - and no one knows at all what results they will bring - while in the United States, as is clear from the President's statements, there are intensified efforts to promote a programme of expanding and modernizing chemical weapons, which are being deployed both within and outside of United States territory.

Still another example. Up to now the two Soviet-United States treaties on the limitation of underground nuclear tests have not yet been entered into force. They

were signed almost 10 years ago, and we have repeatedly proposed to the United States that we should ratify them. But to this very day, the United States has refused to do so.

And what subterfuges they resort to! At first they said that ratification of those treaties would interfere with the talks on the general and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. Later, after wrecking those talks as well, they began to talk about verification difficulties.

Of course, the problem here is not one of verification; the treaties that have been signed contain provisions dealing with this subject in great detail. The problem is something else - it is Washington's unwillingness to tie its own hands by any limitations that would interfere with its efforts to increase and improve nuclear weapons.

Another reason I have touched on the question of verification is that the United States brings it up every time it is unwilling to reach agreement. When there is a real desire to agree on measures for arms reduction and disarmament, verification has not been and cannot be an obstacle. This is proved by past experience.

Incidentally, when we consider United States policy and practice, we are not less but probably more interested than the United States in reliable verification appropriate for tangible measures of arms limitation and disarmament.

Question. It is sometimes argued in the West that the Soviet Union does not wish to arrive at any agreements with the United States at present but is waiting for the results of the United States presidential election. What would you say on this subject?

Answer. This is what I would say. Those who bring up such ideas either do not know our policy or - most probably - are consciously distorting it. It is a principled policy and is not subject to fluctuations in the world situation.

Throughout the history of Soviet-United States relations, we have dealt with various administrations in Washington. In those cases in which the United States leadership demonstrated realism and a responsible approach to relations with the Soviet Union, one can say that matters proceeded normally. This also had a favourable effect on the world situation in general. When there was no such realistic approach, there was a corresponding worsening in our relations.

We continue to favour normal and stable relations with the United States, relations based on equality, equal security and non-interference in each other's affairs.

Allusions to what "our plans" might be in connection with the United States elections are apparently aimed at covering up the unwillingness of the United States itself to reach agreement with the Soviet Union on questions which demand a solution. A clear idea of how matters stand on this score can be gained by comparing the positions of the two sides even on those questions which I have just mentioned.

Question. What, in your view, is needed to enable people to stop living in constant fear for the world?

Answer. First of all, the policy of States, especially States possessing nuclear weapons, must be directed towards removing the danger of war and strengthening peace.

The primary efforts must be aimed at halting and reversing the arms race. It is time to stop talking in generalities about the desirability of talks and proceed to eliminate the serious obstacles that have been placed in the way of arms limitation and arms reduction, proceed to build up confidence and to establish mutually advantageous co-operation.

I have already spoken of a number of far-reaching proposals made by the Soviet Union on specific questions in these fields. There are also some other major questions which will require concentrated effort on all sides.

Thus, it would undoubtedly help bring a decided turn for the better in the world if all the nuclear States would undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and also undertake to freeze their nuclear arsenals both quantitatively and qualitatively. That does not require any complicated discussions. What is needed here is a demonstration of political resolve. The results will unquestionably be substantial in all respects, the most important one being the clear demonstration of a willingness to refrain from efforts to attain military superiority over others. Our country does not seek such superiority, but it will not permit anyone else to attain such superiority over it.

In general, it is extremely important to introduce certain norms aimed at attaining the goal of peace into relations between nuclear-weapon States. I have already spoken about this in some detail.

An urgent task is to establish an atmosphere of trust in international relations. This will require a responsible and prudent policy on the part of all States, as well as the adoption of appropriate practical measures leading to that end. A combination of large-scale steps relating to political affairs and international law with steps of a military and technical nature, which is advocated by the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, would make it possible to ensure the success of the Stockholm Conference and make its results a major contribution to the strengthening of European and international security.

The most vigorous efforts must be made to eliminate the existing hotbeds of tension and military conflict in various parts of the world and to prevent the creation of new ones.

In other words, there are numerous opportunities to promote the strengthening of peace and international security by concrete action.

The Soviet Union is ready to co-operate with all States in attaining these goals.