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PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

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

Letter dated 4 September 1984 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of
the Permanent Mission 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 published on 2 September 1984 of replies by K. U. Chernenko, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, to questions from the newspaper Pravda.

I request you, Sir, to circulate this text as an official document of the General Assembly under items 54, 59 and 68 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) R. OVINNIKOV
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the
USSR to the United Nations

* A/39/150.

ANNEX

REPLIES BY K. U. CHERNENKO, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION AND PRESIDENT OF THE PRESIDUM OF THE SUPREME SOVIET OF THE USSR, TO QUESTIONS FROM THE NEWSPAPER PRAVDA

Question: The American Administration has recently set forth once again in concentrated form its foreign-policy priorities. What is there to be said on the subject?

Answer: Indeed, the United States leaders have made quite a few speeches of late, particularly in connection with the Republican Party Convention. These statements and the election platform adopted at the Convention enable us to judge the present United States Administration's view of the world and its intentions. And, it must be said, the impression left is a depressing one.

The political priorities and, what is more important, the practical actions of those who shape United States foreign policy are clearly geared towards a further dangerous increase in international tension. This assessment is widely shared in political circles and by the general public.

Washington is parading with cynical frankness its great-power ambitions and exaggerated notions of America's role and place in the modern world. It has pretensions to be stronger than everyone else, to control the fate of nations and to impose its will upon everyone, everywhere. In a word, it is now talking of a "crusade" not only against socialism but, in fact, against the whole world.

At a time when the peoples of the world are deeply concerned about the future, when they expect Governments to have a highly responsible policy aimed at strengthening international peace, radically limiting and ending the arms race and eliminating sources of conflict, Washington is proclaiming its intention of operating with brute military force.

Obsessed by force, those in Washington are simply losing their sense of reality. The world has changed drastically. Its problems cannot be resolved by force. This has been proved on many occasions, even by the experience of the United States itself. One's own security cannot be strengthened at the expense of the security of others. Today, it is equally futile to count on achieving military superiority in the hope of winning a nuclear war. I repeat: the Soviet Union is not seeking military superiority over others, but it will not allow superiority over itself. Possibly, some people in the United States still find it hard to get used to this, but the fact will have to be faced that our two States can deal with each other only as equals, taking into account each other's legitimate interests. There is no sensible alternative.

Washington is attempting to justify conducting its policy from a position of strength by invoking certain "moral" arguments. They would like to assume nothing less than the right to determine which States are "democracies" and which are not,

who should be described as advocates of "freedom", like the Pinochet régime in Chile and the racists in South Africa, and who should be bombarded by heavy guns, as happened in Lebanon, and not only in Lebanon. In other words, they declare as being moral everything that they consider permissible for themselves, even the toppling of legitimate Governments, the policy of State terrorism and the waging of undeclared wars. Therein lies the main reason for the aggravation of existing and the emergence of new areas of tension, be it in the Middle East, southern Africa, Central America or other regions.

Conflict situations - and we are firmly convinced of this - can and must be settled only by peaceful means that take full account of the interests of those directly concerned and are guided by the broad objectives of strengthening international security.

Take the Middle East. The tragic events there show that peace cannot be achieved through separate deals, and, even less so, through military interference. A radical improvement of the situation in that region can be achieved only through the collective efforts of all parties concerned. That is the basis of the Soviet plan for a Middle East peace settlement, which has received broad support in the Arab world, as well as elsewhere.

To sum up, I would like to stress that, however hard the United States flexes its military muscles, it will not succeed in changing the world and the world will not start to live by American standards.

There must be a change towards a policy of realism, common sense and business-like co-operation in tackling the problems facing mankind.

Question: Washington is continuing to declare its readiness to conduct talks with the USSR on outer space. What, in your opinion, are the real prospects for holding talks on preventing the militarization of outer space?

Answer: Washington is fond of speaking about its readiness for talks and is even suggesting that it will send a delegation to Vienna. In fact, however, the United States Administration does not want to tackle the problem of preventing the militarization of outer space - its intentions are to conceal its negative stand from the world public and to justify the elaboration and realization of plans for space weapons.

That is why our proposal for holding talks on outer space has not received a positive response from the United States side. During a discussion of the purpose of the talks, the United States tried first of all to change the very subject to be considered. Instead of agreeing explicitly upon a discussion of the specific issue of prohibiting space weapons, it began insisting that the talks should deal with questions relating to nuclear weapons in general - in other words, questions discussed at the talks in Geneva, which were broken off as a result of well-known actions by the United States.

What subject does the Soviet Union propose to discuss at the talks? The subject would be that of precluding the possibility of the spread of the arms race

into outer space and fully renouncing strike space systems, including anti-satellite weapons. In other words, the aim would be to ensure that there is no threat to Earth of war from outer space, and no threat to outer space of war from Earth or from space itself. As the first step, we propose that a reciprocal moratorium should be imposed on the testing and deployment of strike space systems and that talks should be started simultaneously.

Such an agreement would not only prevent the arms race in outer space but, just as important, would facilitate the solution of questions of limiting and reducing other strategic weapons. I would like to place special emphasis on this.

The problem of space weapons cannot be tackled by partial measures. It is impossible, for instance, to ban one type of anti-satellite weapon and allow another, or to ban anti-satellite weapons alone and give the green light, as it were, to other types of space weaponry. In both instances, the result would still be a space arms race. The United States position amounts, in fact, to a desire to legalize such a race. This is evidenced in official statements made by United States leaders both publicly and in contacts they have had with us.

Thus, the American side's approach to the problem of outer space and, consequently, to the purpose of the talks is directly opposite to our approach. What, then, would be the sense of holding talks? Talks are needed not for their own sake, after all, but for reaching accords that would effectively prevent the space arms race.

It is to be hoped that an understanding of the need for adopting joint measures to prevent the militarization of outer space will nevertheless prevail in the ruling circles of the United States.

Question: Political circles in many countries say they want to see a resumption of the Soviet-American dialogue. What is your attitude to the dialogue and to talks under present conditions?

Answer: As I understand it, what is meant is a dialogue and talks on major political issues - on questions whose solution determines the fate of the world. I have already had occasion to say: there is no need to convince us of the usefulness of such a dialogue.

We have always advocated serious and concrete talks. We proceed from that same position in the search for solutions to current issues with the present United States Administration. Regrettably, we have encountered a different attitude towards talks. Let us take an issue of major importance such as the limitation and reduction of both strategic and medium-range nuclear weapons. For more than a year Washington looked for any pretext not to become involved in talks at all. That time was used for another purpose - to move ahead with large-scale military programmes.

When the talks did, in fact, start in Geneva, it very quickly became apparent that the United States representatives had gone there without any constructive objectives, and instead had the intention of working for solutions that would have

given the United States military advantages over the Soviet Union. There is, of course, no sense in such talks.

Only strict observance of the principle of equality and equal security of the sides can make serious and effective talks possible. Washington's rejection of that principle led to the collapse of the talks in Geneva. It was Washington that undermined those talks.

There are far too many issues today that need to be discussed and resolved. And that will have to be tackled.

I want quite categorically to reaffirm our readiness for dialogue and for honest and serious talks aimed at achieving accords which take into account the security interests of all countries and peoples.

That is our understanding of dialogue.
