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Translation from the Russian

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

Dear Mr. President:

I have carefully read your letter of July 2, 1984. Let me say frankly that I was looking in it for a positive response to our proposal to hold Soviet-American negotiations this September on preventing the militarization of outer space. Regrettably, there is no such response in the letter.

One has to reach such a conclusion despite the fact that you express readiness to start negotiations in Vienna. For from your letter it clearly follows that the U.S. is not agreeing to participate in the kind of negotiations which the Soviet side proposes and in which it is prepared to participate.

Let me recall that the Soviet Union favors the adoption of urgent measures which would enable us effectively to block all channels for extending the arms race into space. This can be done by banning all space attack systems, which is precisely what we propose to have negotiations about, and by establishing a moratorium, simultaneously with the start of negotiations, on testing and deployment of such systems.

The American side essentially is talking about conducting not negotiations on space, but some sort of "conference" without a definite agenda, i.e. there would be a conversation about everything and about nothing specifically.

We are far from underestimating the importance of questions of nuclear armaments, which in your letter are linked with the problem of space. You know our position with regard to how to solve these questions. But as before, nothing points to the readiness of the American side to take into account this position and open the way out of the present impasse. Banning space weapons is a problem of great importance in its own right. To tie it to questions of limiting and reducing nuclear arms, which are in fact currently blocked, would be to put negotiations on space attack weapons into a stalemated position as well. At the same time, the deployment of space attack weapons would inevitably lead to a sharp escalation of the arms race on earth too, and would complicate all the more the possibility of undertaking effective measures for limiting and reducing armaments in general. We are convinced that such a development of events would serve nobody's interests.

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As for space weapons themselves, the emphasis here should, of course, not be on studying something. It is necessary to reach agreement on practical measures in order to prevent the appearance of space attack weapons of any kind. This is also what determines the concrete questions put forward by the USSR for negotiations, in order to resolve the problem in all its aspects and in a radical way.

We approach these negotiations seriously and responsibly, and we expect the same attitude from the American side. If, however, for some reason it is difficult for you to give consent to such negotiations at the time we suggested, we would have to take that into account. It is important that we be in agreement that such negotiations are necessary, and that we will conduct them without unjustifiable delays.

In conclusion I wish to emphasize the main point once again. There cannot be any doubt that it is more sensible to exclude space from military competition in advance, rather than trying later on to eliminate the otherwise inevitable, serious and perhaps even irreparable damage to stability and security. I appeal to you, Mr. President, to look at this whole problem once again from this perspective. I would like to hope that you could give a positive reply to our proposal, which remains in force.

Sincerely,

K. Chernenko.

Moscow  
July 7, 1984

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