

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 7, 1984

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Our two countries have now announced the beginning of new negotiations on the whole range of questions concerning nuclear and outer space weapons, as you proposed in your letter of November 17. The common ground reflected in your letter and mine of November 15 encourages me to hope for substantial progress in the difficult task we are undertaking together. Let me comment briefly on those areas where there appears to be a coincidence of views.

First, we agree on the objective of eventually liquidating nuclear arms, as you put it. It seems to me that this common objective should stimulate and guide the effort to begin the process of reducing these arsenals.

Second, we agree on the need to negotiate what you call resolute and immediate practical measures to move forward on the real issues we are facing. Such measures, and, in particular, good results in the negotiations we have now agreed to undertake, would have a positive impact on the world situation and our relations, as you say. As Secretary Shultz and I explained to Foreign Minister Gromyko here in Washington, the suggestions which I made in my United Nations address were developed to meet this need, and I recalled them in my letter for that reason.

Third, having referred in my letter to the fact that space weapons and offensive nuclear arms are "inherently related," I was struck by your statement that "there is an organic, and I would say, objective relationship between these issues." I believe it will be important, as we proceed, to seek better understanding of precisely how they are related, in order to permit productive negotiations.

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George Shultz will go to Geneva prepared to negotiate a mutual understanding on the subjects and objectives of follow-on negotiations. I therefore hope that the Geneva meeting will set in motion negotiations which will result in mutually acceptable agreements to begin reductions. This is a crucial first step toward the objective of reducing the threat of nuclear weapons and ultimately eliminating such weapons entirely. The Geneva meeting will begin the process. It must deal with procedural issues, but I believe it important that we also get down to real substance.

Secretary Shultz will have concrete ideas to present in Geneva. I hope that you share my view of the urgent need to focus on the substance of the critical issues to be covered, and that Foreign Minister Gromyko will be prepared to explain your own thinking on strategic and intermediate-range weapons and on outer space as well. I would envisage following up on the January session during subsequent meetings between our Foreign Ministers. This could assist us in moving the negotiations forward quickly.

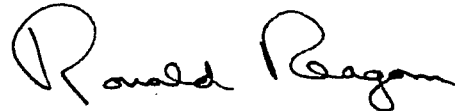
I have recently designated Mr. Paul Nitze to work with George Shultz as he prepares for the meeting in Geneva. Depending on the results of the Geneva meeting, we might find that it would be useful for Mr. Nitze to meet periodically with a counterpart from your side to develop specific proposals or resolve problems in the various arms control negotiations underway at a given time. This is a matter that can be discussed during the January meeting, but if you have any immediate thoughts on the idea, I would of course welcome them.

I hope that our agreement to begin arms control negotiations will have a favorable effect on our efforts to achieve progress in other areas of our relationship. As I noted in my letter of November 15, I think it could be useful for both our countries to establish a more intensive dialogue on regional issues, including regularized meetings at the policy level. Similarly, more active cooperation in the cultural, economic and scholarly fields, and to expand contacts between our peoples, would be of mutual benefit, and is worthy of our best efforts. In this latter

connection, I am encouraged by the Soviet Union's expressed readiness to join with us in discussions designed to lead toward meetings of the joint commissions established under our bilateral cooperative agreements in the areas of agriculture, housing and the environment. And here I should say once again that steps by the Soviet Union to resolve outstanding problems in the humanitarian field could have a positive impact on our effort to improve relations in every other area.

In closing, let me state as strongly as I can my personal commitment to make the results we have agreed to seek as productive, as concrete and as beneficial as possible. I intend to give my personal attention to the arms control negotiations that our Foreign Ministers will seek to launch in Geneva. I will wish to use our correspondence to discuss particularly difficult issues with you, and I hope you will feel free to do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald Reagan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

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