

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

(TRANSLATION)

LS NO. 117677

Dear Mr. President:

I would like to communicate some thoughts and considerations in continuation of the correspondence between us and specifically with a view to our forthcoming personal meeting.

I assume that both of us take this meeting very seriously and are thoroughly preparing for it. The range of problems which we are to discuss has already been fairly clearly delineated. They are all very important.

Of course, the differences between our two countries are not minor and our approaches to many fundamental issues are different. All this is true. But at the same time the reality is such that our nations have to coexist whether we like each other or not. If things ever come to a military confrontation, it would be catastrophic for our countries, and for the world as a whole. Judging by what you have said, Mr. President, you also regard a military conflict between the USSR and the USA as inadmissible.

Since that is so, in other words, if preventing nuclear war and removing the threat of war is our mutual and, for that matter, primary interest, it is imperative, we believe, to use

His Excellency  
Ronald Reagan,  
President of the  
United States of America.

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it as the main lever which can help to bring cardinal changes in the nature of the relationship between our nations, to make it constructive and stable and thus contribute to the improvement of the international climate in general. It is this central component of our relations that should be put to work in the period left before the November meeting, during the summit itself and afterwards.

We are convinced that there are considerable opportunities in this regard. My meeting with you may serve as a good catalyst for their realization. It seems that we could indeed reach a clear mutual understanding on the inadmissibility of nuclear war, on the fact that there could be no winners in such a war, and we could resolutely speak out against seeking military superiority and against attempts to infringe upon the legitimate security interests of the other side.

At the same time we are convinced that a mutual understanding of this kind should be organically complemented by a clearly expressed intention of the sides to take actions of a material nature in terms of the limitation and reduction of weapons, of terminating the arms race on Earth and preventing it in space.

It is such an understanding that would be an expression of the determination of the sides to move in the direction of removing the threat of war. Given an agreement on this central issue it would be easier for us, I think, to find mutual understanding and solutions of other problems.

What specific measures should receive priority? Naturally, those relating to the solution of the complex of questions concerning nuclear and space arms. An agreement on non-militarization of space is the only road to the most radical reductions of nuclear arms. We favor following this road unswervingly and are determined to search for mutually acceptable solutions. I think that in this field both sides should act energetically and not postpone decisions. It would be good to be able to count on having obtained some positive results by the time of my meeting with you.

In connection with certain thoughts contained in your letter of July 27 of this year, I would note that on several occasions we have explicitly expressed our views on the American program of developing space attack weapons and a large-scale anti-ballistic missile system. It is based not on emotions or subjective views, but on facts and realistic assessments. I stress once again--the implementation of this program will not solve the problem of nuclear arms, it will only aggravate it and have the most negative consequences for the whole process of the limitation and reduction of nuclear arms.

On the other hand, quite a lot could be done through parallel or joint efforts of our countries to slow the arms race and bring it to a halt, above all in its main arena--the nuclear one. It is indeed for this and no other purpose that we have taken a number of unilateral, practical steps.

Mr. President, both you and I understand perfectly well the importance of conducting nuclear explosions from the standpoint of the effectiveness of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons. Consequently, the termination of nuclear tests would be a step in the opposite direction. This is what guided our decision to stop all nuclear explosions and appeal to the U.S. to join us in this. Please look at this issue without preconceived notions. It is quite clear that at the present level of nuclear arms our countries possess, a mutual termination of nuclear tests would not hurt the security of either of them.

Therefore, if there is a true desire to halt the nuclear arms race, then there can be no objections to a mutual moratorium, and the benefit it brings would be great. But the continuation of nuclear tests--albeit in the presence of somebody's observers--would be nothing else but the same arms race. The U.S. still has time to make the right decision. Imagine how much it would mean. And not only for Soviet-American relations.

But a moratorium on nuclear tests, of course, is still not a radical solution to the problem of preventing nuclear war.

In order to accomplish that, it is necessary to solve the whole complex of interrelated matters which are the subject of the talks between our delegations in Geneva.

It is quite obvious that in the final analysis the outcome of these talks will be decisive in determining whether we shall

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succeed in stopping the arms race and eliminating nuclear weapons in general. Regrettably, the state of affairs at the Geneva talks gives rise to serious concern.

We have very thoroughly and from every angle once again examined what could be done there. And I want to propose to you the following formula--the two sides agree to a complete ban on space attack weapons and a truly radical reduction, say by 50 percent, of their corresponding nuclear arms.

In other words, we propose a practical solution of the tasks which were agreed upon as objectives of the Geneva negotiations--not only would the nuclear arms race be terminated, but the level of nuclear confrontation would be drastically reduced, and at the same time an arms race in space would be prevented. As a result, strategic stability would be strengthened greatly and mutual trust would grow significantly. Such a step by the USSR and U.S. would, I believe, be an incentive for other powers possessing nuclear arms to participate in nuclear<sup>d</sup> disarmament, which you pointed out as important in one of your letters.

We view things realistically and realize that such a radical solution would require time and effort. Nonetheless, we are convinced that this problem can be solved. The first thing that is needed is to have our political approaches coincide in their essence. Secondly, given such coincidence, it is important to agree on practical measures which facilitate

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the achievement of these goals, including a halt in the development of space attack weapons and a freeze of nuclear arsenals at their present quantitative levels, with a prohibition of the development of new kinds and types of nuclear weapons.

In addition, major practical measures could include the removal from alert status and dismantling of an agreed number of strategic weapons of the sides as well as mutually undertaking to refrain from the deployment of any nuclear weapons in countries which are now nuclear-free, and undertaking not to increase nuclear weapons stockpiles and not to replace nuclear weapons with new ones in the countries where such weapons are deployed.

Naturally, the issue of medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe also requires resolution. I would like to emphasize once again: the Soviet Union favors a radical solution whereby, as we proposed in Geneva, the USSR would retain in the European zone no more weapons of this type, using warheads as the unit of count, than Britain and France possess.

Our delegation at the Geneva negotiations has appropriate instructions, and it intends to present our specific proposals on this whole range of issues and to give comprehensive clarifications in the near future. We count on the positive reaction of the U.S. side and hope that it will be possible to achieve certain results at the present round of talks.

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Meaningful practical steps could and should be taken in the area of confidence-building measures and military measures aimed at easing tensions. I have in mind, in particular, that our two countries, together with other participants of the Stockholm Conference, should make a maximum effort to work towards successful completion of the conference. Such an opportunity, it seems, has now emerged. I would like to repeat what has already been said by our Minister of Foreign Affairs to the U.S. Secretary of State--we are in favor of making the subject matter of the Stockholm conference a positive element of my meeting with you.

Whether or not an impetus is given to the Vienna talks largely depends on our two countries. During the meeting in Helsinki the Secretary of State promised that the U.S. side would once again closely look at the possibility of first reducing Soviet and American troops in Central Europe as we have proposed. I am sure that such an agreement would make a favorable impact on the development of the all-European process as well. I see no reason why it should not be in the interest of the U.S.

In proposing practical measures concerning arms limitation and disarmament we, of course, have in mind that they should be accompanied by relevant agreed verification measures. In some cases it would be national technical means, and in other cases, when it is really necessary, the latter could be used in conjunction with bilateral and international procedures.

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I have not attempted to give an exhaustive list of measures to limit arms and relax military tensions. There could be other measures as well. We would listen with interest to the proposals of the U.S. side on this score. The main thing is for both sides to be ready to act in a constructive way in order to build up a useful foundation, which, if possible, might also be included in the summit meeting.

Mr. President, for obvious reasons I have paid particular attention to central issues facing our countries. But of course we do not belittle the importance of regional problems and bilateral matters. I assume that these questions will be thoroughly discussed by E.A. Shevardnadze and G. Shultz with a view to bringing our positions closer and, better still, finding practical solutions wherever possible.

We hope that in the course of the meetings which our Minister of Foreign Affairs will have with you and the Secretary of State, as well as through active work at the Geneva talks, in Stockholm and in Vienna, and by means of exchanges through diplomatic channels, it will be possible in the time left before my meeting with you to create a situation making for a truly productive meeting.

We believe that the outcome of this preparatory work as well as the results of my discussions with you at the meeting itself could be reflected in an appropriate joint document. If you agree, it would be worthwhile, I think, to ask our



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Ministers to determine how work on such a final document could be best organized.

Sincerely yours,

M. GORBACHEV

September 12, 1985

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

October 2, 1985

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

FROM: JACK MATLOCK *JM*

SUBJECT: Gorbachev's Letter to the President

The official translation of the Gorbachev letter to the President which Shevardnadze presented to him is at Tab A. Since Shevardnadze paraphrased it for the President in almost every particular, you may not wish to burden him with it at this time, but send it later when we have drafted a proposed response. However, I have included a Memorandum to the President at Tab I if you wish to send it forward at this time.

You will note that the letter concludes with a suggestion that we work out "an appropriate joint document" for the meeting. We might consider whether it would be advantageous for us to try to do so. If we do, we should propose a draft, discussion of which could be a vehicle for smoking out Soviet intentions on some of the issues. I have asked State to think about the question and get us their recommendations.

I understand that State is working on a draft reply to the letter, though I have not seen the proposed text yet. Given the relatively short time remaining before the Geneva meeting, it may be a good idea to answer it fairly soon -- that is, next week. After consultation with State, I will convey to you my thoughts on the substance of a reply.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That you sign the Memorandum at Tab I to the President.

Approve  Disapprove

OR, ALTERNATIVELY

2. That you hold the letter and send it to the President when we have prepared a draft reply.

Approve  Disapprove

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

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SYSTEM II  
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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Received SS

1985 OCT -7 PM 9:42

October 7, 1985

*Send I'd like a copy of  
his letter to have for  
reference purposes.*

*RR Done 10/8 79*

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INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROBERT C. MCFARLANE *RCM*

SUBJECT: Gorbachev's Letter of September 12, 1985

Attached at Tab A is the official translation of the letter from Gorbachev which Shevardnadze handed you during your meeting last Friday.

You will note that its content is virtually identical to Shevardnadze's initial presentation to you. The one matter which was not mentioned in your meeting is the suggestion at the close of the letter that we consider "an appropriate joint document" to be issued after your meeting with Gorbachev in Geneva. We are now giving thought to whether this is a good idea. If you can reach agreement on some items for a future agenda, a joint communique laying out the concepts might be useful. There are also potential risks, and we will want to weigh them carefully before proceeding.

I will be forwarding to you shortly my recommendation on this point, and also suggestions for a reply.

Recommendation

OK

No

*RR*

That you read the letter at Tab A.

Attachment:

Tab A Official Translation of Letter from Gorbachev, dated September 12, 1985

Prepared by:  
Jack F. Matlock

cc: Vice President

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

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