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PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE
IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY
RESOLUTION 40/88 ON THE IMMEDIATE
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OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-first year

Letter dated 14 October 1986 from the Deputy Head of the Delegation
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the forty-first
session addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose the text of the press conference given by the
General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet
Union, M. S. Gorbachev, in Reykjavik on 12 October.

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English

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I should be grateful if you would have the text circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 21, 47, 54, 55, 60, 62, 68, 126 and 141, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) V. PETROVSKY
Deputy Head of the Delegation
of the USSR to the forty-first
session of the General Assembly

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ANNEX

Text of the press conference given by the General Secretary
of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR
on 12 October 1986 at Reykjavik, Iceland

The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, Michail Gorbachev, gave a press conference in Reykjavik on 12 October for the journalists covering the Soviet-American meeting.

Addressing the representatives of the media, Michail Gorbachev said:

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, Comrades, and welcome to you all.

About an hour has passed since our meeting with the President of the United States of America, Mr. Reagan, ended. It lasted a little longer than we had planned. The business at hand made this necessary. So I want to apologize to you for not coming to the press conference at the appointed time.

You already know that the meeting took place on the initiative of the Soviet leadership. But it would of course not have taken place if Mr. Reagan's agreement had not been forthcoming. I would therefore say that it was our joint decision to have this meeting.

Now it is over. It is sometimes said that face to face, you don't see the other's face. I have just come from the meeting, which, especially in its closing stage, was spent in animated discussions, and I am still under the spell of my impressions. Nevertheless, I will try even now not only to share my impressions with you, but also to sort out what took place. But these will be first impressions, first assessments, a first analysis. A more thorough evaluation of the meeting as a whole is still to be undertaken.

It was a major meeting, as you will realize when I tell you what was discussed, what problems were the subject of very broad, very intensive and very earnest discussion.

The atmosphere at the meeting was friendly. We were able to set forth our views freely and without restrictions. This enabled us to reach a better understanding of many major problems of world politics and bilateral relations, especially on those issues on which the attention of the entire world community is focused - the questions of war and peace, the halting of the nuclear-arms race, in short, the whole range of issues which that subject covers. Before going on to a direct description of the meeting itself, the content of the discussions, the proposals made by the parties and its results, I would like to explain to you why we came forward with the initiative to hold the meeting in Reykjavik. I am a regular reader of the world press, and I have seen in the past few days what a broad response was aroused by the news of the meeting.

There was a good deal of comment in this context both about the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and about the President of the United States. It was asked whether they had not rushed things, whether there was any need for such a meeting, who had given in to whom, who had outplayed whom, and so on and so forth. But, you know, the reason which served as the starting point for our proposal to the President of the United States for an immediate meeting, and his decision to respond positively to that invitation, were very significant.

At this point I would like to recall Geneva, where we met for the first time. A major dialogue took place, and now, when quite some time has passed, our assessment of the Geneva meeting remains unchanged. At that time, if you recall, we recognized the special responsibility of the USSR and the United States of America for the maintenance of peace and jointly stated that nuclear war must never be unleashed and that there can be no winners in it. This is an extremely important acknowledgement. We also stated that neither side would seek military supremacy.

This, too, is a very important statement.

Almost a year has passed since Geneva. The Soviet Government has remained faithful to the commitments it entered into there. On our return from Geneva, we extended our moratorium, which was then in effect until 1 January this year. For 14 months now, our test sites have remained silent - is not this evidence of our faithful adherence to the Geneva accords and our responsibility for the fate of the world? These were not easy decisions to take, bearing in mind the fact that tests were continuing in Nevada at that time, and are still going on now. On 15 January we made a general statement spelling out the basis of a programme to eliminate nuclear weapons by the end of this century.

In June this year, the Warsaw Treaty States put forward a major comprehensive programme for large-scale reductions of conventional weapons and armed forces in Europe. This, too, was a major step in view of the concerns aired by the West Europeans and the United States.

Drawing lessons from the Chernobyl tragedy as well, we came forward with the initiative for the holding of a special session of IAEA in Vienna. This session took place, and you are aware of its results - they are extremely promising. We now have an international mechanism for dealing with many important aspects of the safety of nuclear power.

In other words, during the period that has elapsed - and I do not think I am exaggerating if I assess our policy in this way, for I am talking about facts, not merely about intentions - we have been doing everything possible to contribute to the emergence of a new way of thinking in the nuclear age. We note with satisfaction that the shoots of this new thinking are sprouting, in European soil as well. This was particularly apparent in the success of Stockholm.

Perhaps I will end at this point the list of the concrete actions we have taken, guided by the spirit and the letter of the Geneva agreements with

President Reagan. The facts themselves, I think, enable you to assess the seriousness of our attitude to the Geneva agreements. Still, why did we call for the Reykjavik meeting, what were the motives for this initiative on our part?

The fact is that the hopes for major changes in the world situation, hopes which we all entertained, began to fade shortly after the Geneva meeting, and I think not without reason.

A great deal has been said during the Soviet-American talks, perhaps too much, with, as I said to the President yesterday, 50 to 100 variants of all kinds of proposals being bandied about. This alone raises doubts as to the fruitfulness of the discussions which are under way there.

Had there been one or two, or say even three options, in which case the discussions could have been narrowed down somehow and the search concentrated on some major aspects, that would have given grounds for expecting that the search would culminate in the emergence of some kind of concrete agreements and proposals to Governments. But nothing of this kind is happening at Geneva, although major issues of world politics are being discussed there. For some time these discussions have, to put it bluntly, just been ticking over, and are practically at a standstill. The arms race has not been stopped, and it is becoming increasingly clear that matters are reaching a point at which a new spiral of the arms race is becoming inevitable, with unpredictable consequences, both political and military.

Our major initiatives, to which I have already referred, have evoked a broad response from the world community. But they have not met with the understanding they deserved on the part of the United States Administration.

The situation has been deteriorating, and anxiety has started to grow again around the world. I think it is no exaggeration to say - you yourselves are witnesses to it - that the world is in turmoil. The world is in turmoil, and requires of the leaders of all countries, especially the major Powers and in the first place the Soviet Union and the United States of America, political will and determination capable of halting the dangerous trends.

And so, something had to be done to change this course of events. And we came to the conclusion that a new impetus was needed, a powerful impetus to set the processes on the right course. Such an impetus could come only from the leaders of the USSR and the United States of America. That is why, in replying to President Reagan's letter of 25 July, I decided to invite him to an immediate meeting. I wrote: "The situation is such that we should set all business aside for a couple of days and hold the meeting without delay".

This letter was handed over to the President by Comrade Shevardnadze. And now this vitally important meeting has taken place. We assumed that much would depend on its outcome. And, naturally, we did not come to the meeting empty-handed.

What did we bring to Reykjavik? We brought a whole package of major proposals which, if accepted, could indeed have brought about within a brief period a breakthrough, I would say, in all aspects of the campaign to limit nuclear weapons and really avert the threat of nuclear war, and would have made it possible to start the movement towards a nuclear-free world.

I proposed to the President that we should, here in Reykjavik, give binding instructions to our foreign ministers and other appropriate departments to prepare three draft agreements which the President and I could then sign during my visit to the United States of America.

The first, on strategic weapons, was for a 50 per cent reduction, no less, with an eye to eliminating these deadliest of weapons completely by the end of the century. Our premise was that the world is waiting for really major steps, deep reductions, not mere window-dressing to keep public opinion quiet for a while. The time has come when really bold and responsible action is called for in the interests of the entire world, including the peoples of the Soviet Union and the United States of America.

Of course, the Soviet and American delegations assigned the task of preparing the draft agreement would have had to apportion, in a balanced, positive and honest manner the cuts in strategic weapons from the levels they have reached over time. The point at issue is the very same triad which was recognized way back when SALT II was being drafted. But when we began to discuss this issue with the President, what was dragged out again in reply was everything that figures in the Geneva talks - all the levels and sublevels: a mass of arithmetic, in short, and all designed to confuse the substance of the issue. We then put forward the following specific proposals: reduction by half of each component of strategic offensive weapons - land-based strategic missiles, submarine-launched strategic missiles and strategic bombers.

The American delegation agreed to that. Thus, we reached agreement on a very important issue.

Similarly, as you will undoubtedly recall, when we put forward our proposal for a 50 per cent reduction in Geneva, we were counting medium-range missiles as strategic weapons because our territory is within their range. At present, however, we have dropped that demand as well as the issue of forward-based systems.

As a result of these major concessions, an agreement on the reduction of strategic arms was reached in Reykjavik.

Our second proposal was concerned with medium-range missiles. We proposed that instructions be given to draw up an agreement covering that category of weapons as well, with a view to abandoning all the options that had been discussed previously, such as interim or provisional arrangements, and reverting to the earlier American proposal, namely, the elimination of all American and Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe. In other words, we were departing from the proposals which we had made in Geneva and leaving completely aside the question of the nuclear capability of France and the United Kingdom. You will appreciate that this was a very significant concession on our part. Indeed, those two countries are allies of the United States, and their nuclear capability is constantly being enhanced and upgraded. Moreover, all of their military activities are closely co-ordinated within NATO. We know that for certain. None the less, we removed that obstacle to the agreement.

And I would draw your attention to the fact that we made serious concessions here.

Asia was also a matter of concern. Here, too, we proposed a compromise, namely that we should sit down to negotiations forthwith, clarify our demands and work out a solution. We were aware that the question of missiles with a range of less than 1,000 kilometres was bound to arise. So we made a proposal on that issue as well, namely, a freeze on such missiles and talks on what to do with them.

Those are the kind of major measures that we wanted to go for. The Americans were not, I think, expecting this from us, but they joined in the discussion and stated frankly that they were not happy about removing their missiles from Europe. They again invited us to consider the intermediate option. However, we insisted on ridding Europe completely of Soviet and American medium-range missiles.

In the course of the discussions on the subject, we pointed out to the President of the United States that he was apparently disowning his own brainchild, namely the "zero option", which he had been insisting upon earlier. We were now accepting it.

The talks, which were very intense, went on until today, and we decided to make yet another constructive step forward. We announced that if the American and Soviet missiles were removed from Europe, we would agree to retain only 100 warheads on our medium-range missiles, with the Americans retaining the same number on their medium-range missiles deployed in the territory of the United States.

Ultimately, we also reached agreement on that category of nuclear weapons - although, as I have already stated, our major concession helped here too.

But, as I have already pointed out on several occasions, things have to be set in motion somehow. Bold, innovative solutions are needed. If we always turn to the past for guidance, if we relate everything to circumstances belonging to completely different times, without considering where we are today and where we will be tomorrow, or what our situation might be in the future, and that there may be no tomorrow at all if we act in this way, then there will be no dialogue whatsoever. A start has to be made somewhere. We therefore made this compromise, although, as I have said, it was not easy for us to do so. As a result, at the meeting with the President of the United States we also reached agreement on the reduction and elimination of missiles.

In view of our readiness to make substantial reductions in nuclear weapons, we made the following proposition: when we turn to the actual business of eliminating nuclear weapons, there must be absolute clarity about verification. At present, verification must be made stricter. In fact, the Soviet Union is in favour of threefold verification, which would give both sides full assurance that they would not be drawn into a trap. We reaffirmed our readiness for any form of verification. In view of our position, that too ceased to be an issue.

Another problem stemming from the fact that we are embarking upon the practical elimination of nuclear weapons is that each side must have a guarantee

that the other will not try to achieve military superiority while the process is under way. In my view, this is a perfectly fair and legitimate consideration, both politically and militarily.

Politically, if we begin reductions, steps must be taken to ensure that all the constraints that exist today and prevent the development of new types of weapons are not only maintained but also strengthened.

Militarily, real care must be taken not to reach a point where both sides have reduced their nuclear capability, but while the reductions were taking place in the process of doing so, one of them has secretly made preparations, recaptured the initiative, and achieved military supremacy. That would be unacceptable. This applies to the Soviet Union, but we are entitled to make the same demands on the American side. In that connection, we made the following proposition: once we have entered the stage of real, large-scale reductions and, 10 years later, the elimination of Soviet and United States nuclear capability, the mechanisms restraining the arms race, especially instruments such as the ABM Treaty, must not be undermined during that time, but consolidated.

Our proposal could be summed up as follows: both sides should strengthen the ABM Treaty, which has no expiry date, by pledging equally to waive for the next 10 years their right to withdraw from that treaty.

Is this proposition correct and logical? It is.

Is it serious? It is.

Does it meet the interests of both sides? It does.

At the same time, we also suggested that throughout those 10 years all ABM requirements should be strictly observed, that the development and testing of space weapons should be prohibited and that only laboratory research and testing should be permitted.

What did we mean by this?

We are aware of the commitment of the United States Administration and the President to SDI. Presumably, if we agreed to its continuation and admissibility of laboratory tests, the President would be able to go ahead with the research and clarify what SDI is and what it involves - although that is already clear to many people, ourselves included.

And that was the point at which the clash between the two approaches to world politics, even on such questions as the curbing of the arms race and the banning of nuclear weapons, really began.

The American Administration and the President insisted to the bitter end that the United States had the right to carry out tests and research on all aspects of the SDI, not only in laboratories but outside them, including in outer space.

But who could agree to that?

And so it turned out that we had been on the point of taking the most momentous, historic decisions, because earlier agreements - ABM, SALT I and SALT II - had dealt only with arms limitations and we were now talking of a significant reduction. But because the United States Administration, as we now became persuaded yet again, has come to believe in its technological advantage and is bent on achieving military supremacy through SDI, it therefore decided to bury the accords that were all but concluded and on which we were already coming to an agreement. All that remained to be done was to give instructions for the actual accords to be drawn up and the procedure for their practical application to be laid down. All these accords could have been signed during my forthcoming visit to Washington. The American side has put paid to that.

I told the President that we were missing a historic opportunity. Never before had our positions been so close.

As he left, the President said he was disappointed, and that, from the very outset, I had had no intention of arriving at an agreement or an understanding. What makes you so inflexible in your approach to SDI, the question of testing and all the related issues, just for the sake of one word? Yet, I believe that this is not a matter of words, but a matter of substance. And it is precisely that which holds the key to an understanding of what is on the mind of the United States Administration. And I think that what is on its mind is the same, it seems to me now, as what is on the mind of the United States military-industrial complex in the United States. That complex has the Administration in its power, and the President was not free to take such a decision. We took breaks and held talks, and I could see that the President was given no support. That is why our meeting failed when we were already so close to producing historic results.

That, then, was the dramatic situation which arose at the meeting, when, in spite of very substantial concessions on our part, we failed to reach agreement.

Although our dialogue with the United States has been difficult at times, it has continued since Geneva, and I informed the President of what I thought our meeting during my visit to the United States should be like. My point of view is known to you.

It is not a condition. It represents, I think, an understanding of our responsibility: both mine and the President's. It prompts precisely the following approach to a future meeting in Washington. We need a productive meeting. It should lead to tangible results, to far-reaching changes, and to steps especially in relation to such urgent questions as nuclear-arms control, the prevention of the arms race and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

I told him in my letters, and I said during our meeting: you and I, Mr. President, must not allow our meeting in Washington to fail. That is why I was in favour of our meeting without delay. We have constructive contributions to make in order to reach agreement and to come to the meeting in Washington with serious proposals and decisions.

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I cannot even for one moment accept that we should meet in Washington and that meeting should be a failure. And, generally speaking, what would people in the Soviet Union, the United States and all over the world have to think then? What sort of politicians are at the helm of those enormous States? They meet, they exchange letters, and now they have met for the third time, and still they can't agree on anything. That, I think would be a simply scandalous outcome with unforeseeable consequences. We simply cannot allow that to happen. It would cause disappointment all over the world, not only in our own countries.

That, in fact, is the conception of how we should conduct the Washington meeting and what results we should achieve. That was what prompted us to propose a working meeting here in Reykjavik in order to sort out everything in a businesslike manner, to listen attentively to each other and to try to find points of convergence and common approaches consistent with the interests of our two countries, with the interests of our allies and of the peoples of all countries.

Regrettably, the Americans came to this meeting empty-handed, with the set of moth-balled proposals which are already stifling the Geneva talks. As you see, we made proposals to reverse that situation, to clear the way and begin a new stage and actually resolve the outstanding issues.

Well, now I have told you what happened.

What is to be done.

The United States remains a reality, and the Soviet Union remains a reality. A character invented by one of our Russian writers was going to shut down America - he didn't succeed. We do not suffer from that complex. America is a reality, and what a reality it is. The Soviet Union, I think, is also an impressive reality. But the whole world, too, is a reality. And today one cannot gain authority or - what is more important - resolve outstanding problems without taking into account the realities of today's world.

At this meeting, we felt very strongly that there was a shortage of new thinking. Again we were confronted with the spectre of the pursuit of military supremacy. This summer I met with Mr. Nixon, and he told me: "Drawing from my vast political experience and my whole life, I have the right to conclude that the pursuit of that spectre has taken us too far. And now we do not know how to dig ourselves out of the obstructions formed by mountains of nuclear weapons. All this complicates and poisons the world situation".

Nevertheless, I think that all that has taken place here - and there were already agreements nearly completed, only we did not succeed in making them official - was highly significant. We put forward our proposals as a package. I think you understand why this was done. Even the very path which we have trodden here, in Iceland, towards such major agreements as significant reductions in nuclear weapons provided us with a wealth of experience and considerable gains.

I think that both the President of the United States and we ourselves should reflect further on the entire situation which has ultimately evolved at this

meeting reconsider the issues which we discussed and attempt to bridge the gap which divides us. We have already agreed on many things, and we have come a long way. The President no doubt needs to consult with Congress, with political circles and with the American public.

Let America think it over. We shall be waiting, and shall not withdraw the proposals which we have made public. As a matter of fact, we are ready for agreement on them. That is the first point.

Secondly, I think that all the realistically-minded forces in the world should act now. All those living on earth - whether in the socialist, the capitalist or the developing world - now have a unique chance: to begin - at last - work in earnest to end the arms race, prohibit and destroy nuclear weapons, and thereby deliver mankind from the nuclear threat. That task was uppermost in our minds when we proposed to the President that we should agree that, immediately after the conclusion of our meeting in Reykjavik, our representatives should sit down to talks on prohibiting nuclear explosions. Our approach was flexible. We stated that we considered this to be a process in the course of which we could also examine at some stage - perhaps even as a matter of top priority - the question of yield "thresholds" for nuclear explosions, the number of nuclear explosions a year, and the fate of the 1974 and 1976 treaties. Thus, we would proceed towards the elaboration of a comprehensive treaty on the total and final prohibition of nuclear explosions.

We were close to finding a formula on that question as well. By the way, we said at the meetings: we are not asking you to introduce a moratorium. That is your business. You report to your Congress and your people whether you will continue nuclear explosions after the talks have begun or join our moratorium. That is up to you. But let us sit down for full-scale talks to work out an agreement on the total and final prohibition of nuclear explosions.

Thus, even here our positions were drawing closer. But when a rift occurred on the ABM question the whole discussion was broken off and the search was suspended. We stopped our meeting.

I think that we and the Americans should think it all over, and that world opinion should reflect on the situation which has evolved with respect to the principal issue which worries peoples of all countries - the issue of war and peace, of the nuclear threat. I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that everything we proposed to the President is in keeping with the interests of the American people, and of the peoples of all countries. If some people do not think so, let them listen closely to the demands of the American people, the Soviet people and the peoples of all countries.

When I came here for the meeting, I said that it was time for action. Indeed, the time to act has come, and we should not waste it. We shall act. We shall not relinquish our course towards peace, nor give up our struggle to end the arms race, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons and ward off the threat to the entire planet. And I am convinced that we are not alone in that struggle.

That is what I wanted to tell you now, right after the conclusion of the meeting. Obviously, I could tell you more if I had had more time to think about all that has happened. It seems to me, however, that I expressed myself clearly and precisely on all issues.

In our discussions, the President and I touched upon many other issues. We discussed humanitarian issues and dealt with concrete problems in that sphere. Two groups of experts were at work. You probably already know that. Our side was headed by Marshal of the Soviet Union Akhromeyev, the Chief of General Staff; the American side, by Mr. Paul Nitze. They worked practically all through the night.

The group on humanitarian issues was headed, on the Soviet side, by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Bessmertnykh and, on the American side, by Assistant Secretary of State Ms. Ridgway.

There was an interesting exchange of opinions there too, and some of the understandings reached there could have become a component part of the final document. But, since the main issue collapsed, the entire process ground to a halt.

As you see, this was, on the whole, an interesting, important and promising meeting. But, for now, this is how it has ended.

But let us not give way to despair. I think that this meeting has brought us to the very important stage of knowing where we stand. Moreover, the meeting has shown that agreements are possible. I am convinced of it.

Thank you for your attention.

Do you really still have questions even after my detailed speech? All right, go ahead. We've got all night.

Q: (Czechoslovak television): Mikhail Sergeevich, you said that here in Reykjavik a historic opportunity had been missed. When, in your view, may there be another opportunity?

A: You know, I would be optimistic about that. Because a great deal was accomplished both on the eve of the meeting and at the meeting itself. And if we, both in the United States, in the White House, and at home in the Soviet leadership go over everything from realistic positions and display realism and responsibility, the opportunity to resolve these problems has not yet been lost.

Q: (NHK TV, Japan): Does that mean that the dialogue with the United States, with the Reagan Administration, will continue? Or do you think that possibilities are very small for a productive dialogue with Reagan?

A: I think that the need for dialogue is now greater than ever, however difficult it may be.

Q: (Pravda): Mikhail Sergeevich, why do you think, the American Administration decided, after all, to wreck the negotiations, acting so irresponsibly and ignoring world public opinion?

A: I think America still needs to make up its mind. I don't think it has done that yet. And this, we felt, had an effect on the President's position.

Q: (Australian Radio Broadcasting Corporation): You said that President Reagan is a captive of the military-industrial complex. Does this mean that the next two years will be sterile? Are you hopeful that the next US President will not be a captive of this complex?

A: Whatever the military-industrial complex may represent today, however much weight it may carry in present-day America, we are not going to overestimate its capabilities. The final say in any country is with the people, and that goes for the American people, too.

Q: (Icelandic Radio and Television): After the negative result of the summit, will the Soviet Union counter the American SDI programme with something else and will it not launch its military space arms programme full blast?

A: I think you have grasped the Soviet position. If we have now reached the stage where we are starting on deep cuts in nuclear weapons - both strategic and medium-range missiles - and we and the Americans have already reached agreement to do this within 10 years, we are entitled to demand guarantees that during that period nothing unexpected or unforeseen will occur. That would include such areas as space and the deployment of a space-based ABM system.

I told the President (perhaps I will lift the curtain a little on our exchange of views) that SDI does not worry us militarily. I don't think, even in America, anyone believes such a system can be built. Moreover, if America ultimately decides to go ahead, our response will not be in kind. Indeed I told him, Mr. President, you know you have made an ally of me on SDI. He was surprised. It turns out, I said, that my criticizing SDI so heavily, gives you your most convincing argument for SDI being necessary. You just have to say, if Gorbachev is against it, it must be a good thing. And you get the applause and the funding. True, there have been some cynics and sceptics saying that this may be a crafty plan by Gorbachev: not getting entangled in SDI himself, but destroying America. Figure it out for yourself. In any case, SDI doesn't frighten us.

I say this with conviction because bluffing in such matters is irresponsible. There will be a response to SDI. Not of the same kind, but a response there will be. And the cost to us will not be enormous.

But what is the danger of SDI? Firstly, a political one. You immediately get a situation that creates uncertainty, that heightens distrust of one another, suspicion. And then, of course, nuclear-weapons cuts are out of the question. In short, if we are to get down seriously to nuclear-arms reductions, a completely different setting is needed. Secondly, there are, in fact, military considerations. SDI can be a route to other kinds of weapons. We can also say this with authority. A route to a completely new phase in the arms race, with unpredictably serious consequences.

The upshot is that, on the one hand, we agree to begin cutting back on nuclear weapons, the most dangerous and terrible available today, while on the other hand, we must give our blessing to research and even conduct trials in space, in real-life conditions, so as to create the last word in weapons. That doesn't square with normal logic.

Q: (Washington Post): You have just held another meeting with President Reagan after two days of sessions. What is your impression of the President as a political figure? Do you believe that he shares your sense of responsibility for the destinies of the world?

A: I have the impression that Mr. Reagan and I can continue our dialogue and work to untangle major, life-affecting issues, including those I have been talking about.

Q: (Danish television): Do the unsatisfactory results of the meeting mean that no progress will be achieved on the banning of nuclear tests and other problems which were discussed yesterday and today? Is this problem - the banning of nuclear tests - linked with other problems discussed at this session?

A: I have already answered this question. We do not believe this means an end to our contacts with the Americans and the President, far less our international relations. The quest continues and will continue. And I think that what has happened here, in Iceland, should give us all the greater cause to feel, now, that we must campaign together to normalize the international situation, find ways out of the impasses, including the ones discussed here, in Reykjavik; in fact, one impasse has cropped up here. But I am optimistic.

Q: (GDR television): You said the meeting had brought no results. Does that mean it was useless? What do you think, has peace become more reliable after the Reykjavik meeting?

A: I think you have thought your question out carefully. I always like our German friends' clarity of expression and thinking. I think that what has happened in Reykjavik - although we have had our meeting, we could not agree on issues when we seemed to have found ways forward - is sad and disappointing. But I would not call our meeting fruitless. On the contrary, it is still one stage in a complex and difficult dialogue in search of solutions. We are, in essence looking for the unobvious solutions to complicated questions. So let us not sow panic around the world. At the same time, I have to say that the world needs to know all that is going on so that it does not feel it is a spectator from the sidelines. The time has come for rigorous action by all concerned.

Q: (ABC Television Company): Mr. General Secretary, I don't understand why, when you had an opportunity to achieve with President Reagan an agreement on cuts in nuclear weapons, the Soviet side did not agree to SDI research. You yourself said in Geneva that you were ready to pay a high price for nuclear-arms cuts. And now, when you had such an opportunity, you missed it.

A: Your question is a little critical, so I shall answer it in more detail.

First, the President of the United States came to Reykjavik with empty hands and empty pockets. The American delegation, I would say, brought us the trash from the Geneva talks. It was only thanks to the far-reaching proposals by the Soviet side that we managed to come up with major agreements (they were not formalized, mind you) on cutting strategic offensive weapons and medium-range missiles. Naturally, we were hopeful in the circumstances, and I think it is quite plain to any politician, military man or plain ordinary person, that if we sign this kind of agreement to make major cuts in nuclear weapons, we must take care nothing happens to disrupt this difficult process, which we have been working towards for decades. It was then we raised the point that we want to strengthen the ABM Treaty. The American side is constantly burrowing under the ABM Treaty.

America has already cast doubt on SALT II, and, now in Reykjavik, it would like to bury the ABM Treaty - with the Soviet Union and Gorbachev there to help, too. That won't do. The world would not understand, I'm sure of that.

Everyone sitting here is convinced that if we now start attacking the ABM Treaty - the most recent mechanism, which has done so much to restrain the arms race - then as politicians we are worthless. But just respecting the Treaty, when deep cuts are starting to be made in nuclear weapons, is not enough: we think the Treaty needs to be strengthened. We suggested a mechanism: holding off for 10 years, while we reduce to nothing and abolish our countries' nuclear potential - holding off from using the right to back out of the ABM Treaty.

At the same time, so that no one - neither the Soviet Union should try to outstrip America in space research and take the lead, with military superiority, so to speak, nor America try to overtake the Soviet Union - we said: we agree to laboratory research and testing but we are against doing research and testing the components of a space-based ABM system in space. That is a stipulation. Here again, our stipulation was constructive and took America's position into consideration. If America had accepted, it would have been able to work on its problems in continuing laboratory research, but without developing space-based ABM defences. I think the logic here is rock-solid, as children say, and sometimes we need to learn from children, too.

Now let us give the ladies a chance.

Q: (Guardian): Is the Soviet Union planning any new initiatives for Western Europe after what came to pass in Reykjavik?

A: I think Western Europe hears what I am saying, and if our proposals are reflected upon and examined carefully, it will be seen that they are in Western Europe's interests. We are aware that we cannot remain indifferent to the interests of Western Europe, where a new way of thinking is taking root and there is a growing sense of responsibility for the preservation and fortification of our European home.

Q: (Newsweek): What are your plans for a visit to Washington? You said that an agreement or two should be achieved before such a visit. Can such agreements be achieved before you come on a visit to Washington?

A: I believe that in spite of today's dramatic events, we have not moved away from Washington but closer to it. If the President and the US Administration take up my proposal to continue looking at everything we discussed here in Reykjavik, and consult the circles they deem necessary, I do not think all is lost. There is a chance, using what we had here in Reykjavik, of arriving at agreements which would make a meeting in Washington realistic and, perhaps, productive.

Q: (Cable News Network): Mr. Gorbachev, you said in your speech that President Reagan should think over the situation and consult with Congress and the American people. Do you think that American public opinion will back the Soviet approach?

A: We will have to wait and see.

Q: (Rude Pravo): I would like to ask you a question as a politician and a lawyer. What is your opinion on human rights priorities in the nuclear-missile age and what role can the human factor play in settling questions of war and peace?

A: You are a philosopher. I once studied philosophy myself, I may say, and have now turned to it again. I believe that when we discuss human rights, we must remember that safeguarding peace and averting the nuclear danger hanging over mankind is the main priority. If there is peace, life will go on, and we will sort out our problems one way or the other. More and more people in this world are educated. I think the different nations will sort everything out. So, when we discuss human rights, I would put the right to live at the top of the list. This is the first point.

The second point is the human factor. In the nuclear age (and it is here that I glimpse this new way of thinking), the threat of nuclear war once again makes the importance of the human factor in achieving peace and preventing war an issue. For wherever it breaks out, a war today would affect everyone. Only ill-wishers see the hand of Moscow behind all the anti-war movements and all the people working for peace. Today men, women and children of all ages are standing up, joining hands and demanding that the world stop the dangerous drift towards nuclear war. I see the role of the human factor growing significantly in these circumstances.

Q: (Izvestia): The White House has often referred at great length to Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles as the main danger to America. But in Reykjavik we proposed to eliminate that danger over a period of 10 years. What is your impression of the reasons for the other side's unwillingness to head off this danger to its country?

A: You are quite right to raise the question. That reasoning has been used by the American side for years to support the contention that the Soviet Union was not serious about disarmament and ending the arms race, that it disregarded America's concerns and so forth.

As you can see, we proposed radical reductions, and made the point quite forcefully. There is a triad of strategic weapons, recognized both by us and by the Americans. We suggested that all three elements should be cut by 50 per cent over the first five years. That is a major step.

But at the same time we told the Americans that we too were concerned. A large part of America's strategic forces is deployed in submarines; nearly 700 missiles with almost 6,000 multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles. And we know these submarines are patrolling the seas and oceans around the Soviet Union. Where will they strike from? They are no less dangerous than heavy land-based missiles.

In short, when the Americans do not want to come to grips with a question, they look for problems and raise artificial obstacles. But the point is that here, those obstacles have been removed. We took a major step by dropping our reservations about medium-range missiles, which are of strategic importance for America. We also left forward-based systems out of the calculations for resolving the strategic missile question. All this shows our good will. Yet the Americans did not meet us half-way.

The Americans think that by using outer space they will achieve military supremacy over us and fulfil the prediction of one of their Presidents, who said that whoever dominates outer space will dominate the Earth. This shows that we are up against imperial ambitions.

But the world today is not what it was. It does not wish to be and will not be the fief of the United States of America or the Soviet Union. Every country has the right to make its own choice, to have its own ideology, its own values. If we do not recognize this, there can be no international relations, only chaos and the law of the jungle. We will never agree to this.

America is probably pining for the old days when it was mighty. From the military point of view, it was superior to us, for we came out of the war economically weak.

There is obvious nostalgia for the past in America. Nevertheless, we have to hope our American partners can recognize the realities of today's world. For them, too, it is essential to do so. Otherwise, if the Americans do not begin to think in modern terms, and act in accordance with current reality, we shall make no progress in the search for correct decisions.

Q: (Bulgarian television): As I understand it, the talks in Geneva are not being broken off and the Soviet leadership intends to instruct the Soviet delegation to look for solutions to the questions which have not yet been settled.

A: That is correct.

Q: Do you think that the same instructions will be given to the American delegation after Reykjavik?

A: I hope that that will be the case.

Q: (CTK News Agency): In what way, do you think, will the outcome of the Reykjavik meeting influence the Helsinki process?

A: I think that both the politicians and the peoples of Europe will rise to the occasion at this very crucial moment. The times call for action, not just grandiloquent declarations which lead to no specific results. The world is weary, and sick and tired of idle talk; it needs real progress - disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons. I think that this tendency will increase. I place special hope in the wisdom and responsibility of the politicians and peoples of Europe.

Q: (NBC TV): As I understand it, you are calling directly on other members of the world community to act as a kind of lobby to influence the United States and make it change its mind?

A: We know how developed lobbying is in your country and how the political process works in America. Perhaps that is why even the President found it hard to take a decision at this meeting. But when it is a question of strengthening peace and taking genuine action to that end, when collective efforts are needed - this applies to everyone, not just the United States and the Soviet Union - then I do not think we should be speaking of lobbying, but of a sense of responsibility, of native common sense, of an awareness of the value of peace today, and the need to preserve it. It is therefore insulting to accuse peoples or movements campaigning for peace of being lobbyists for the Soviet Union. The point is, people are defending their political and civic positions.

Q: (Icelandic newspaper, "Morgunbladid"): I publish a newspaper in Iceland. Was it hard for you to decide to come to Reykjavik? After all, Iceland is a member of NATO. At the same time, as is known, our Government has proposed proclaiming the North a nuclear-free zone, and I would like to know your attitude to this.

A: I wanted to end on this topic, and it is a pleasure to do so with a question from a representative of the Icelandic press. I would remind you that it was we who suggested Iceland as a possible place for a meeting, so we had no difficulties on that count.

I wish to thank the Government of Iceland and the Icelandic people for having applied all their human, organizational and physical abilities to all the organizational aspects of this meeting. We are grateful for this and we have been very comfortable here. I have learnt many interesting things from Raisa Maximovna, who has had many meetings in Iceland. They were all very interesting and we have been delighted with the friendly atmosphere and the great interest shown in our country. We are grateful to Iceland and to the Icelandic Government for all they have done. We wish your people prosperity.

With regard to the last part of your question, your Government's wish to declare the North a nuclear-free zone: we welcome this.

Dear friends, thank you for your attention. I think we have employed our time together usefully. I wish you all the best. Goodbye.