

Averting the growing nuclear threat and curbing the arms race

Memorandum of the USSR

In the present circumstances, at a time of mounting world tensions and the growing risk of nuclear war, no task confronting States is or can be more important than that of working out and adopting effective measures to ease tensions and to strengthen universal peace and the security of peoples.

Today, when States have accumulated enormous stockpiles of arms with colossal destructive power, when the arms race is not only continuing but gaining greater momentum, when ever newer and ever more sophisticated and destructive means of mass annihilation are emerging one after another, it is more than ever incumbent on all States, especially on the major Powers, to show great responsibility, sensible restraint and a thoroughly considered approach in all their foreign-policy moves and actions. They must display a political will to join forces in order to normalize the situation and consolidate positive principles in relations between States.

The Soviet Union, the other socialist States, and most States on all continents are consistently and purposefully acting in line with this policy. They consider it their duty to the world's peoples and to the present and future generations to pursue that policy, and they will continue to abide by it unswervingly in the future.

1.

The latest aggravation of the threat of war has resulted from the fact that in recent years some States have been pursuing a policy inimical to the interests of peace.

Contrary to the commitments to prevent nuclear war which they assumed in the 1970s, they are now saying that a nuclear conflict is admissible or even "acceptable".

Instead of realistically understanding that any use of nuclear weapons would inevitably lead to a global nuclear clash, with all the ensuing consequences, they are devising various methods of nuclear warfare, from limited to all-out nuclear war, and deploying their strategic offensive forces on the assumption that they would be the first to use nuclear weapons in the hope of gaining the victory.

In an attempt to discard the only rational policy in today's circumstances, that of maintaining the existing military balance between the USSR and the United States, between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO, the policy of strategic stability, they have opted for a course aimed at attaining military superiority.

This course is being lavishly financed: the costs of implementing new military programmes are running not merely into billions, or even tens and hundreds of billions, but into trillions of dollars.

Those funds are to be spent for the production, in addition to the thousands of nuclear weapons already in stock, of many more thousands of new weapons with explosive yields ten, twenty or even one or two hundred times as great as the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

Nuclear weapons capable of delivering warheads to hard targets with greater accuracy are being developed. Strategic weapon systems are being made mobile. New strategic systems, especially long-range cruise missiles, have gone into production. Outer-space military systems to be equipped with laser weapons are on the drawing boards. The use of shuttle spacecraft would carry the arms race into outer space. The arsenal of chemical weapons is being modernized and considerably expanded, and the production of a new generation of lethal chemical weapons, the binary weapons, has begun. The effectiveness of conventional armaments is being greatly increased.

New United States nuclear-missile systems are planned for deployment as far away from the territory of the United States and as close to the territories of the USSR and the other socialist States as possible, in order to reduce the time of delivery of nuclear warheads to targets, thereby enhancing the surprise factor in an attack. In practical terms, this is a direct attempt to upset the strategic balance. Current NATO plans to deploy hundreds of new medium-range United States missiles in Western Europe are aimed at doing just that. Forward-based United States systems are also being deployed in the Far East and the Western Pacific. The same purpose is served by the concentration of a major United States naval force with a nuclear capability in the Indian Ocean and the creation in that area of an extensive network of United States military bases, with its main strategic base on the island of Diego Garcia.

One cannot fail to come to the conclusion that all this militaristic activity is designed to provide a material foundation for aggressive strategic concepts based on adventurism and designed by men carried away with militaristic frenzy.

The Soviet Union has warned time and again and declares once more that it will be able, under any circumstances, to do what is needed to protect its security and the security of its allies and friends. As L. I. Brezhnev said, whatever types and quantities of new weapons the United States may produce, "the Soviet armed forces will have appropriate means to counter such weapons". He stressed that the Soviet Union "will be able to give a prompt and effective response to any challenge that may be hurled at it".

Nevertheless, the pursuit of military superiority by the United States and some of its NATO allies is a fact that is having a strong impact on current world developments. This is a dangerous policy, dangerous for all States and peoples.

The policy of seeking military superiority over the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty countries and intensifying the arms race has already resulted in

/...

serious international complications. It is fraught with the risk of strategic destabilization, that is to say, of upsetting the present military balance.

The continued blocking of negotiations on such important subjects as the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons, the limitation and subsequent reduction of military activities in the Indian Ocean, the limiting of sales and deliveries of conventional armaments, and the blocking of negotiations on anti-satellite systems are links in a chain inextricably connected with the policy of seeking military superiority..

What are the reasons for the lack of progress in the talks on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe and for the non-implementation of United Nations decisions aimed at bringing about the prohibition of neutron weapons, renunciation of the development of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction, and negotiations on nuclear disarmament? The reasons are the same. What was it that prevented the Madrid meeting of the States participating in the European Conference from concluding its work early this year and from adopting a decision to convene a conference on security and confidence-building measures and disarmament in Europe? It was the same quest for military superiority.

Sometimes an attempt is made to justify the pursuit of military superiority by alleging that it is necessary for strengthening peace and security. The truth is just the opposite: such a course can only diminish the security of all States, including those which pursue it, and make even more menacing the clouds of the nuclear threat hovering over our planet.

There is a different road open to mankind - that of strengthening peace and security, of détente and disarmament. This is an opportunity which must and can be made a reality.

But strong and vigorous action by all States and peoples is needed to avert nuclear war and radically reduce military tensions. What is required above all is a political will for peace, based upon an awareness of the realities of the nuclear age and capable of shaping new approaches and opening new paths towards the elimination of the nuclear threat.

To that end, as stated in the message of L. I. Brezhnev, 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 the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Soviet Union has pledged not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

This extremely important action of the Soviet Union is intended to facilitate a turn away from the dangers of today to a more reliable and stable peace and to strengthen people's hopes that a nuclear conflagration will never break out anywhere.

The peoples of the world have the right to expect the other nuclear States to take similar steps following the Soviet Union's decision. That would radically change for the better the entire military and political situation in the world.

/...

The military confrontation will become less critical than it is today, strategic stability will be strengthened, and international trust will again cement relations between States with different social systems.

The strengthening of strategic stability and the steadying of the military balance will also require a wide range of material measures.

11

The consolidation of the military balance, however important a prerequisite for lasting peace it may be, is not enough to guarantee that mankind will be delivered from the threat of war, especially if the levels of military confrontation are high and continue to grow. It is necessary to go much further, to work to bring those levels down gradually and to limit and reduce armaments - in other words, to give new and strong impetus to current negotiations, to resume those that have been suspended and to initiate new talks dealing with all those subjects. In the present circumstances negotiations on the reduction of armaments and on disarmament constitute the central area of interaction between States in the interests of peace and in the interests of saving mankind from the threat of nuclear catastrophe.

The human mind, which has created the monstrous nuclear engine of destruction, is capable of finding ways to dismantle it and to deliver mankind from the nightmare it brings. The Soviet Union, like many other States, deems it necessary to work for that end in several areas at once, especially the following:

Elaboration, adoption and stage-by-stage implementation of a nuclear disarmament programme. In our view, such a programme could include:

- Cessation of the development of new systems of nuclear weapons;
- Cessation of the production of fissionable materials for the purpose of manufacturing various types of nuclear weapons;
- Cessation of the production of all types of nuclear munitions and of their delivery vehicles;
- Gradual reduction of accumulated stockpiles of nuclear weapons, including their delivery vehicles;
- Total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons should cover all nuclear systems, primarily strategic weapons and medium-range systems.

The Soviet Union would be prepared to agree on a reciprocal basis that even the first step towards reducing nuclear weapons, both strategic and medium-range should be a major one.

/...

Limitation and reduction of strategic arms. It is the view of the Soviet Union that this is one of the most important problems still to be resolved. Negotiations on that problem call for a responsible and serious attitude. The USSR has taken this attitude towards such negotiations, with a view to reaching mutually acceptable agreement.

As L. I. Brezhnev stated, achieving such agreement requires, first of all, that negotiations should actually pursue the objective of limiting and reducing strategic arms rather than serve as a cover for continuing the arms race and upsetting the existing parity. Second, the two sides should conduct the negotiations with due regard for each other's legitimate security interests and in strict conformity with the principle of equality and equal security. Lastly, everything positive that has been achieved previously in that area should be preserved.

Limitation and reduction of nuclear arms in Europe. Notwithstanding all the difficulties encountered in the Soviet-United States negotiations on this subject at Geneva, the Soviet Union continues to believe that progress and mutually acceptable agreement should be reached at those negotiations and is doing its utmost to that end.

The Soviet Union reaffirms its readiness to agree to a total renunciation by both sides of all types of medium-range weapons capable of striking targets in Europe. It could go even further and agree to the total removal of both medium-range and tactical nuclear weapons from Europe. If the United States and its allies are not prepared to accept a comprehensive solution of that problem, the USSR could agree to a gradual but very substantial mutual reduction in the number of medium-range nuclear weapons.

It may be recalled that, seeking to contribute to success at the Geneva talks, the Soviet Union declared, as a goodwill gesture, a moratorium on further deployment of its medium-range nuclear weapons in the European part of the USSR. Moreover, it announced its intention, also unilaterally, to remove some of those weapons and has already taken practical steps in that direction.

In the area of nuclear disarmament in general, the USSR is prepared to go all the way, provided, of course, that all the nuclear Powers participate, that is, to agree to the total elimination of all nuclear weapons - strategic, medium-range and tactical.

The funds released at each stage of nuclear disarmament would be devoted entirely to peaceful purposes, including assistance to developing countries.

In elaborating measures of nuclear disarmament, appropriate methods and forms of control that would satisfy all the interested parties and promote effective implementation of the agreements reached would have to be agreed upon.

The Soviet Union is prepared to take part in all these activities. It is now the turn of the other nuclear Powers, especially the United States, to respond.

/...

Complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. The long-overdue solution of this problem would mean that the nuclear powers would no longer be in a position to improve nuclear weapons further and to develop new types and varieties of such weapons. At the same time, the régime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons would be strengthened.

The problem of nuclear-weapon tests can be tackled either radically or by stages. The Soviet Union is prepared to ratify at any time the Treaty on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests signed by the USSR and the United States in 1974. With a view to working out a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, the multilateral forum of the Geneva Committee on Disarmament should be utilized to the fullest extent. The Soviet side is also prepared to resume immediately the trilateral talks between the USSR, the United States and the United Kingdom on the conclusion of such a treaty, suspended by the other parties at the final stage of the talks.

Prevention of further proliferation of nuclear weapons. While approaching this urgent task in the context of consolidating strategic stability and the military balance, the Soviet Union believes that it has a direct bearing on matters of nuclear disarmament as well. The greater the certainty that nuclear weapons will not be acquired by States that do not have them at present, the more incentives there will be to curtail existing nuclear capabilities.

The Soviet Union proceeds from the belief that consolidation of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons of the régime is equally in the interest of nuclear and non-nuclear countries, since it facilitates the preservation of peace and the security of peoples. The non-proliferation régime has created favourable conditions for broad international co-operation in the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. The Soviet Union has invariably supported such co-operation and is actively participating in it.

Many non-nuclear countries have suggested that, within the framework of the régime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons not only they but the nuclear States as well should place some of their peaceful nuclear installations under the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Soviet Union is prepared to accommodate the wishes of non-nuclear countries in this respect also. It declares its readiness, as an act of goodwill, to place some of its peaceful nuclear installations - several atomic power plants and some research reactors - under IAEA control.

Non-nuclear countries which become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons naturally hope that their security will, as a result, be better ensured rather than weakened. They have raised the issue of appropriate guarantees on the part of nuclear Powers. The Soviet Union views this position with understanding and is prepared to conclude an international convention on the subject.

It is also important to achieve international agreement on the non-stationing of nuclear weapons in countries in which there are no such weapons at present and, in the meantime, refraining from further moves to station nuclear weapons in the territories of other States. This would also help to strengthen the security of non-nuclear countries and consolidate the régime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear-free zones. It is the view of many States that the establishment of geographical zones in which nuclear weapons shall be neither developed nor deployed could play an important role in curbing the nuclear arms race. Following the example of Mexico and other Latin American States which have signed the Treaty of Tlatelolco, similar initiatives have been advanced by other countries with regard to Northern Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa and a number of other regions.

The Soviet Union takes a positive view of those initiatives. As a nuclear Power, it is prepared to help in arriving at generally acceptable solutions concerning the establishment of nuclear-free zones.

III.

Although nuclear weapons possess the greatest destructive potential, other types of weapons pose a grave danger to mankind as well. This makes it imperative that such weapons too should be made the subject of negotiations on their limitation, reduction and elimination.

Prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. Like many other States, the Soviet Union is of the opinion that this is one of today's most pressing problems and that it must be solved without delay. By refusing to continue the bilateral talks and thereby nullifying Soviet-United States agreement on a joint initiative on the banning of chemical weapons, the United States has dashed the hopes of the world's peoples for its early solution. It is all the more important, therefore, to intensify joint efforts by States in the Committee on Disarmament to draft an international convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. Such a convention should, of course, provide for strict supervision, which, in addition to the use of national means, would also comprise international procedures, including on-site inspections on an agreed basis.

In the meantime, States should avoid any action that might complicate the talks. It is especially important in this connexion that States should renounce the deployment of chemical weapons in countries in which there are no such weapons at present.

Prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space. The Soviet Union's proposal on this subject, whose urgency is not disputed by anyone, has been referred by the United Nations General Assembly to the Committee on Disarmament for consideration. The Committee should proceed without delay to draft alone an international treaty on the subject.

/...

Limitation of naval activities. The Soviet Union has already advanced, alone or jointly with other socialist countries, a number of initiatives designed to limit naval activities in certain areas of the World Ocean. Similar proposals have also been made by some other States.

Those initiatives deal with the limitation and reduction of the levels of military presence and military activities in areas in which conflict situations are most likely to arise. With a view to enhancing stability in those areas, it would be desirable to consider the following points:

- Removal of missile submarines from extensive areas of combat patrol, and confinement of their cruises within agreed limits;
- Limitation of the deployment of new submarine-based ballistic missile systems;
- Renunciation of the deployment of both sea-based and ground-based long-range cruise missiles;
- Extension of confidence-building measures to the seas and oceans, especially to areas through which the busiest shipping routes pass;
- Making the Mediterranean a zone of stable peace and co-operation;
- Strengthening of peace and security in the Persian Gulf area.

The Soviet Union supports the idea advanced by non-aligned countries, of turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace and is taking an active part in the preparations for an international conference on that subject. It is prepared to resume at any time talks with the United States on the limitation and subsequent reduction of military activities in the Indian Ocean.

The USSR could even go further in directly limiting and reducing naval arms. It would be desirable in this connexion for States possessing powerful navies to examine jointly the question of their limitation and reduction.

Limitation and reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces. Here too there is a need for serious talks between States that could lead to a substantial lowering of the present levels of armed forces and armaments, both on a global scale and in specific regions. Development of the types of weapons that have come to be called conventional is going ahead at an ever-increasing pace and poses a real danger, aggravating regional instability and plunging more and more countries into the whirlpool of onerous military programmes.

The recent conclusion of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects has been a useful step. For that reason, the Soviet Union has been among the first to ratify the Convention and its Protocols. But more sweeping and important tasks are still to be tackled.

/...

One of them is to reach agreement on not increasing armed forces and conventional armaments and thereby lay the foundation for talks on their subsequent reduction.

Another important objective is to agree on the limitation of sales and deliveries of conventional armaments, which currently run into tens of billions of dollars. With a view to reaching such agreement, the Soviet Union is prepared to resume the Soviet-United States talks which were suspended by the United States at the very time when possible approaches to a solution had begun to emerge. The USSR also has no objection to inviting other States to take part in the consideration of the problem of limiting the arms trade.

Reduction of military budgets. This problem has been under discussion in the United Nations and other international forums for many years. Yet actual military expenditures continue to grow rapidly.

At the same time, most States, including the Soviet Union, have been expressing their conviction that the process can and must be reversed.

The reduction of military budgets could be tackled in different ways, in percentage points or in absolute figures, on the basis of radical solutions or gradual progress. One could start by freezing military budgets, a move that could probably be agreed upon with the least difficulty if the political will exists.

Renunciation of the use of new discoveries and scientific and technical achievements for military purposes. This is a major and sweeping problem which is not easy to solve. Yet it has been raised by life itself, and it is clearly time to start thinking jointly of ways to solve it. Scientists and experts will obviously have to be invited to participate in its consideration.

Relationship between disarmament and international security. The easing of military tensions, the strengthening of strategic stability and the cessation of the arms race would unquestionably help to ensure greater security for every State. At the same time, serious political and legal measures enhancing the security of States would make it easier for them to take practical steps to limit and reduce armaments.

Progress in disarmament and in strengthening international security should be sought on parallel courses. A sound concept of security at the end of the twentieth century requires strong action to ward off the emergence of armed conflicts, including nuclear conflicts, rather than drawing up strategic charts for their escalation.

In the military field such action means steps to end the arms race, in the political and legal field, it means the settlement of international conflicts and crises through negotiations and the consolidation of the principle of the non-use of force; and in the moral and political field it means primarily the renunciation of any propaganda for nuclear war and of sabre-rattling in any flare-up of international tension. The Soviet Union advocates steady and consistent progress along all these lines.

In the same context, a problem whose solution is long overdue relates to the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations. The examination of that question in the appropriate United Nations bodies must be moved off dead centre.

Disarmament and economic development. The arms race is the only sphere of human effort in which material resources are being squandered unproductively and on a gigantic scale. Those resources should be used to solve the socio-economic problems facing the world's peoples, to raise their well-being and to develop culture rather than to manufacture engines for the destruction of human beings.

The possibility of allocating significantly greater resources than today to assist developing countries in eradicating the backwardness they inherited from the times of colonialism depends primarily on the rechanneling to peaceful purposes of the resources currently absorbed by the arms race.

* * *

The second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament is confronted by demanding and urgent tasks of great magnitude. Member States will have to discuss the most vital and pressing problems of arms limitation and disarmament. That discussion must give fresh impetus to practical efforts to solve those problems. This is a direct duty of the United Nations stemming from its Charter and from its main purpose of saving the present and succeeding generations from the scourge of war.
