

COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 3 FEBRUARY 1983 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE COMMITTEE ON
DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE REPLIES OF Mr. Y.V. ANDROPOV,
GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION, TO QUESTIONS FROM
A PRAVDA CORRESPONDENT

I transmit to you herewith the replies of Y.V. Andropov, General Secretary of
the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to questions from
a Pravda correspondent.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this information as an official
document of the Committee on Disarmament.

(Signed): V.L. Issraelyan
Representative of the USSR
to the
Committee on Disarmament

*/ Reissued for technical reasons.

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REPLIES OF Y.V. ANDROPOV, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION, TO QUESTIONS FROM A PRAVDA CORRESPONDENT

Question: What is your attitude to the open letter from the President of the United States of America to the people of Europe in which he proposed that the USSR and the United States should sign, on United States terms, an agreement on the elimination of medium-range land-based missiles?

Answer: First of all, I must say quite definitely that there is nothing new in the proposal by President R. Reagan. It is still - as all the world's news agencies immediately remarked - a matter of the same "zero option". It is already generally recognized that this is patently unacceptable to the Soviet Union. Indeed, can one talk seriously about a proposal according to which the Soviet Union would have unilaterally to destroy its medium-range missiles, while the United States and its NATO allies would retain all their nuclear weapons in this category.

It is, and this is well known, precisely this unrealistic position on the part of the United States that is blocking progress at the talks in Geneva. That the United States President has now reaffirmed this position demonstrates one thing: the United States does not wish to seek a mutually acceptable accord with the Soviet Union and is thereby deliberately condemning the Geneva talks to failure.

I have already said that the USSR will not agree to unilateral disarmament. And if matters come to the point of the deployment of new United States missiles in Europe, we shall respond in due fashion. But that would not be our choice.

The Soviet Union is for another course. The best thing of all, and this we suggest, is not to have in the European zone any nuclear weapons at all, either medium-range or tactical weapons. Since the United States will not agree to this, we are also prepared to accept a solution whereby the Soviet Union would have no more missiles than there already are in Europe on the side of NATO. At the same time, an agreement should be reached on the cutting by both parties to equal levels of the numbers of aircraft capable of delivering medium-range nuclear weapons. In that way there would be complete parity both in missiles and in aircraft, and parity on an incomparably lower level than at present.

The Soviet Union is prepared to sign such an agreement. Is the President of the United States prepared to sign such an agreement based on the principle of equality and equal security?

Question: The United States President suggests meeting with you to sign the agreement of which he is talking. What have you to say on this score?

Answer: We have believed and still believe that summit meetings are of special importance to the solution of complicated problems. This determines our serious approach to them.

For us, this is not a matter of a political or a propaganda game. A meeting between the leaders of the USSR and the United States aimed at finding mutually acceptable solutions to urgent problems and at developing relations between our countries would be useful both to the Soviet Union and to the United States of America, to Europe and to the whole world.

But when the United States President makes a meeting conditional on consent by the Soviet Union to the patently unacceptable solution he has proposed to the problem of nuclear armaments in Europe, that is in no way indicative of a serious approach by the United States leadership to this issue in general. That can only be regretted.