DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

LETTER DATED 24 MAY 1983 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the answers given by Y. V. Andropov, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to the questions put by representatives of a number of Finnish public organizations, which were published in the newspaper Pravda on 11 May 1983.

The answers outline the position of the USSR concerning a number of questions discussed in the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

I request you, Sir, to have the text of these answers circulated as an official document of the Disarmament Commission.

(Signed) O. TROYANOFSKY
Chairman of the USSR delegation to the United Nations Disarmament Commission
ANSWERS GIVEN BY Y. V. ANDROPOV TO QUESTIONS BY REPRESENTATIVES
OF A NUMBER OF FINNISH PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

1. **Question:** What are your proposals concerning nuclear disarmament and the removal of the dangerous situation in Europe and concerning the creation of a nuclear-free Europe?

2. **Answer:** The removal of the nuclear danger is the most important line of policy of the Soviet State. From the moment the first atomic bombs appeared, we have steadfastly striven for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. As early as 1946, we proposed the conclusion of an international convention under which nuclear weapons would be prohibited and nuclear energy would be used solely for peaceful purposes. It was not possible to achieve this at the time, through the fault of those who wished to retain an atomic monopoly for themselves.

3. In the years that followed, the Soviet Union persistently put forward, and it continues to put forward, proposals aimed at halting the growth of nuclear arsenals, reducing the risk of a nuclear conflict and ultimately making such a conflict totally impossible. Let me recall just a few of these proposals.

4. We propose halting the production of nuclear weapons and then gradually eliminating the stockpiles of such weapons. In order to start matters moving on a practical basis, we have advocated the preparation of a programme of stage-by-stage nuclear disarmament and have presented an appropriate document on the subject in the Geneva Committee on Disarmament.

5. Endeavouring to facilitate the reaching of agreements on the limitation of nuclear weapons and to take the first step to reduce such weapons, the USSR has declared its readiness to agree to a mutual freeze of nuclear arsenals by all nuclear-weapon States or, as a start, by the Soviet Union and the United States alone. We also propose that for such time as the Soviet-United States negotiations are in progress, the medium-range nuclear weapons and the strategic weapons of the two sides should be frozen.

6. In the negotiations with the United States on strategic weapons, our side has proposed a substantial reduction, by more than one fourth, in the total number of strategic delivery vehicles, which would lead to the removal of more than 1,000 such vehicles from the arsenals of the two sides. The number of nuclear warheads would also be reduced to equal levels, which would be lower than the levels of today.

7. We propose that all test explosions of nuclear weapons should be immediately prohibited everywhere; this would make it more difficult to produce new kinds and types of such weapons. Pending the conclusion of an agreement on this point, we are prepared to declare, together with all nuclear-weapon States, a moratorium on all nuclear explosions, including peaceful explosions.

8. Lastly, the Soviet Union has unilaterally undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and has called upon the other nuclear-weapon Powers to follow that example.
9. Now, concerning Europe. The best solution of the problem of nuclear armaments here would be the complete liberation of the European continent from both medium-term and tactical nuclear weapons. This is the real path to a nuclear-free Europe. This path must, of course, be followed by all States which have nuclear weapons in this area. Up to now, unfortunately, those to whom our proposal was addressed are acting as if it did not exist at all.

10. At the negotiations with the United States at Geneva, we also proposed the following variant: agreement on a radical reduction by both sides of their medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe - reducing the number on each side by about 1,000, to a level of 300 units. The Soviet Union is prepared for reductions which will leave it with only 162 missiles, that is to say, exactly the same number as are possessed today on the NATO side by the United Kingdom and France. The number of carrier aircraft would be fixed at equal low levels of 136 units each.

11. They say to us that this would leave the Soviet Union with more nuclear warheads on its missiles. Well, we are prepared to agree to equality of the nuclear potential of the two sides in Europe both in delivery vehicles and in warheads, taking into account, of course, the relevant weapons of the United Kingdom and France.

12. In other words, we propose that the USSR should have neither more missiles nor more warheads on the missiles than the NATO side has during each period to be determined by agreement. If the number of warheads on the United Kingdom and French missiles is reduced, an equal reduction will be made in the number of warheads on our medium-range missiles. The same approach would apply to airborne weapons of this class deployed in Europe. This would result in the maintenance of rough parity between the USSR and NATO both in medium-range nuclear-weapon delivery vehicles, that is to say, in missiles and aircraft, and in the number of warheads on them, and this parity would be at a much lower level than today.

13. I wish to emphasize especially that if this new proposal were implemented, the result would be that in the European part of the Soviet Union there would be considerably fewer medium-range missiles and considerably fewer warheads on those missiles than up to 1976, when we did not have the SS-20 missiles.

14. The implementation of this proposal we have made would bring Europe much closer to complete liberation from both medium-range and tactical nuclear weapons. Such a proposal can be rejected only by those who want to deploy new United States missiles in Western Europe at any cost and thereby to destroy the existing balance of forces both in Europe and at the global level. If this happened, the threat of war would come even closer to Europe's doorstep. We cannot permit this, and we shall take the necessary steps to ensure that parity is maintained.

15. Question: Do you support the creation of a nuclear-free zone, for example, in Northern Europe, and are you prepared to give security guarantees for such zones?

16. Answer: Yes, we support the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Northern Europe and in other parts of the European continent, since we regard them as an important means for strengthening the security of the European peoples.
17. We have unequivocally supported the proposal of Finland to make Northern Europe a nuclear-free zone. It is important, of course, that this zone should be truly free from nuclear weapons and that any loopholes that might permit their appearance there should be closed.

18. The Soviet Union, for its part, is prepared to undertake not to use nuclear weapons against Northern European States that will become participants in the zone. This can be arranged through the conclusion either of a multilateral agreement or of bilateral agreements with each of the States participating in the zone. Naturally, the security of these countries would be more reliably ensured if corresponding guarantees were also given by the nuclear States of NATO. But we shall not make this a condition for our undertaking.

19. Taking account of the wishes expressed in a number of Scandinavian countries, the USSR would also be prepared to consider the question of some measures - and they would be substantial measures - that would relate to its own territory adjacent to such a zone and would help to strengthen the nuclear-free status of Northern Europe.

20. In supporting the proposal for a nuclear-free zone in the northern part of Europe, the Soviet Union has also declared its attitude favouring in principle the idea, proposed by the Government of Sweden, of creating in Central Europe a zone free from battlefield nuclear weapons.

21. I am convinced that the implementation of the aforementioned proposals for nuclear-free zones would promote the future liberation of all of Europe from nuclear weapons.

22. Question: If the nuclear Powers made declarations that they would not be the first to use nuclear weapons, what significance would those declarations have for the reduction of the danger of nuclear war?

23. Answer: We are firmly convinced that such declarations would make it easier to avert nuclear war by creating an atmosphere of profound trust in relations between States. And this is especially important in the present international situation.

24. The Soviet Union, as I have already said, has undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. If the USSR's example were followed by the other nuclear Powers, this would be tantamount in practice to a total renunciation of the use of nuclear weapons. After all, if nobody uses them first, then there will be no second or third nuclear strike. Such an obligation would not require lengthy negotiations and agreements. The only thing necessary is good will and a sincere desire for peace. However, the United States and its NATO allies, continuing to rely on being the first to use nuclear weapons, are not inclined to follow the Soviet Union's example.

25. Question: Is the widespread and authentic movement for peace strengthening the security of peoples, and does it provide support for the disarmament negotiations being carried on between the USSR and the United States?
26. **Answer:** I am convinced that this is so. The massive anti-war movement is an important factor for peace. Statesmen and Governments cannot afford to ignore it if they value the opinion of their peoples, and in this sense the peace movement is unquestionably exerting an influence on the arms-limitation negotiations.