DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

Letter dated 7 May 1984 from the head of the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics addressed to the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission

I have the honour to transmit herewith an extract from a speech delivered on 2 March 1984 by K. U. Chernenko, 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, concerning the international situation.

This speech outlines the position of the USSR on a number of issues discussed in the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

I request you to have this text distributed as an official document of the Disarmament Commission.

(Signed) V. ISSRAELYAN
Head of the USSR delegation to the United Nations
Disarmament Commission
EXTRACT FROM A SPEECH DELIVERED ON 2 MARCH 1984 BY
K. U. CHERENKO, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET
UNION AND PRESIDENT OF THE PRESIDUM OF THE
SUZEREAL SOVILT OF THE USSR, CONCERNING THE
INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

Now let us turn to international affairs. One of the most important and
insistent instructions of Soviet voters was, is and will remain the instruction to
cherish peace like the apple of the eye and to ensure the security of our
homeland. I can tell you that the Party and the Soviet State have been following
this instruction unswervingly and in difficult circumstances.

As you know, the past few years have been marked by a sharp intensification of
the policy of the most aggressive forces of United States imperialism, a policy of
blatant militarism, claims to world dominance, resistance to progress, and
violations of the rights and freedom of the world's peoples. The world has seen
quite a few examples of the practical application of this policy. These include
the invasion of Lebanon and the occupation of Grenada, the undeclared war against
Nicaragua, threats to Syria and, finally, the turning of Western Europe into a
launching site for United States nuclear missiles targeted at the USSR and its
allies.

All this compels us to give the most serious attention to strengthening the
country's defences. The Soviet people do not want an arms build-up; they want a
reduction of armaments by both sides. But we must take care to ensure sufficient
security for our country, its friends and allies. This is precisely what is being
done. And let everyone know that none of those given to indulging in armed
ventures will catch us unawares, and no potential aggressor can hope to avoid
devastating retaliation.

At the same time it is precisely the complexity of the situation that forces
us to redouble and triple our efforts in pursuing a policy of peace and
international co-operation.

It is hard to recall a problem of importance for strengthening peace on which
the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have not put forward concrete and
realistic proposals during the past few years. The initiatives of our countries
are winning ever broader support from other States. This was convincingly
confirmed by the United Nations General Assembly at its latest session.

Imperialist policy-makers are striving in every way to limit the international
influence of the socialist countries. They are attempting to impair the cohesion
of these countries and to erode the foundations of the socialist system wherever
they think they can count on success. In these circumstances it is particularly
important to maintain and strengthen the solidarity of fraternal socialist
countries. The leaders of the Warsaw Treaty countries again unanimously expressed
their conviction of this during their recent meeting in Moscow.

The United States has imposed an economic blockade and uttered military
threats against socialist Cuba. But the hopes of frightening it and making it
swerve from its chosen path are doomed to failure. This is guaranteed by the unflinching will of the heroic Cuban people, rallied around their Communist Party. It is also guaranteed by the solidarity shown by the independent countries of Latin America and by many participants in the non-aligned movement with the Island of Freedom. The Cuban people are resolutely supported by the fraternal socialist States. As for the USSR, it was, is and will remain on Cuba's side in fair weather and in foul.

The normalization of relations with the People's Republic of China could, of course, help to enhance the role of socialism in international affairs. We are consistent advocates of this normalization. Political consultations show, however, that there remain differences on a number of questions of principle. In particular, we cannot arrive at any understanding which would prejudice the interests of third countries. However, the exchange of views continues, and we find it useful. The Soviet Union favours raising the level of contacts to the extent that is acceptable to both sides.

It is also useful that mutually beneficial contacts in the economy, culture, science and other fields are being gradually re-established. This is not to the liking of those who want to take advantage of the deterioration of relations between the USSR and China. But it is to the good of both our countries and helps to improve the overall world situation.

The danger of the imperialist policy of constant escalation of tension has become obvious. The graver the threat it poses to human civilization, the stronger become mankind's forces of self-preservation. Indignation is rising in Western Europe over the actions of those who are sacrificing its security to the imperial ambitions in Washington. Millions of participants in the anti-missile movement are quite vocal in making this known. In addition, by no means all the leaders of Western countries and influential political parties approve of the adventurism of the United States Administration. It also worries a large section of the public in the United States itself. It is becoming ever clearer there that the United States has not derived and will not derive any military superiority or political achievements from intensified militarization and aggravation of the international situation. Such actions simply lead throughout the world to growing criticism of Washington's belligerent course. People want peace and tranquillity, not war hysteria. I can say that our conversations with the leaders of the many foreign delegations which attended the funeral of Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov confirmed that quite convincingly.

All this inspires the hope that it will eventually be possible to reverse the course of events and direct them towards consolidating peace, limiting the arms race and developing international co-operation.

Détenue has struck deep roots. This is attested to, for instance, by the convening of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe.

Of course, the curbing of the nuclear-arms race is of key importance to the peace and security of peoples. The Soviet Union's position on that issue is clear. We are against rivalry in building up nuclear-weapons arsenals. We have been and remain proponents of the prohibition and destruction of all types of such
weapons. Our proposals on this matter were put forward long ago, both in the United Nations and in the Geneva Committee on Disarmament, but discussion on them is being blocked by the United States and its allies.

As for Europe, we are in favour, as in the past, of it being free from nuclear weapons, both medium-range and tactical ones. We stand for both sides making the first major step in this direction without wasting time. In so doing, the Soviet Union has no intention of strengthening its security at others' expense, but wants equal security for all.

Regrettably, the United States has turned its participation in the talks on this subject into a tool of propaganda to camouflage the arms race and the policy of the cold war. We have not joined in such a game and are not going to do so. By deploying missiles in Europe, the Americans have created an obstacle to the talks both on "European" and on strategic nuclear weapons. It is the removal of these obstacles - which would also remove the need for the measures we have taken in response - that offers the way to work out a mutually acceptable agreement.

The United States Administration has recently begun to make peaceful-sounding statements, urging us to join in a "dialogue".

World-wide attention has been drawn to the fact that these statements are in sharp conflict with everything that the present United States Administration has said, and - what is most important - with everything it has done and continues doing in its relations with the Soviet Union. Assurances of its good intentions can be taken seriously only if they are substantiated by real actions. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, it has always favoured a search for mutually acceptable, practical solutions to concrete questions for the benefit of both countries, for the benefit of peace. There are quite a few such questions. The United States Administration has many opportunities to prove its desire for peace by its deeds.

Why does the United States, for example, not ratify the treaties with the USSR on the limitation of underground nuclear-weapon tests and nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, which were signed almost 10 years ago, and why does it not complete the work of drawing up an agreement on the general and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests? Remember that it was the United States which broke off the talks on these issues. The United States can also make no small contribution to the strengthening of peace by concluding an agreement to renounce the militarization of outer space. As everyone knows, the USSR has been proposing this for a long time.

The peaceful assurances given by the United States Government would inspire far more trust had it accepted the proposal for a mutual freeze on American and Soviet nuclear weapons. So many weapons have already been accumulated that this step would not create even the slightest threat to the security of either side. But, at the same time, it would greatly improve the general political atmosphere, and, it must be believed, would facilitate reaching agreement on a reduction of nuclear arsenals.
A very important task is to save mankind from the possible use of chemical weapons. Talks on this issue have been in progress already for a long time, but now it seems that the prerequisites for resolving this question are beginning to materialize. The point at issue is the complete and general prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, and of their development and production, and the destruction of all stockpiles of such weapons. We are for effective control of the implementation of such an agreement, and the control should cover the whole process of destruction of nuclear weapons, from beginning to end.

We cannot rule out the possibility that reaching an agreement on those issues would signal a genuine turning-point in Soviet-American relations, and in the international situation as a whole. We would wish for such a change. Now it is up to Washington to act.

The policy of those Powers possessing nuclear weapons is of special significance in our times. The vital interests of the whole of mankind and the responsibility of statesmen to present and future generations require that relations among these Powers should be regulated by certain norms. We feel that these norms should be something like the following:

To regard the prevention of nuclear war as the main objective of one's foreign policy, and to avert situations fraught with the danger of nuclear conflict. In the event that such a danger emerges, urgent consultations should be held to prevent a nuclear conflagration from breaking out;

To renounce the propaganda of nuclear war in any of its various forms, either global or limited;

To undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons;

Not to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances against non-nuclear countries in whose territory there are no such weapons; to respect the status of nuclear-free zones already created; and to encourage the creation of new such zones in other parts of the world;

To prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in any form: not to hand over these weapons, or control of them, to anyone; not to deploy them in the territory of countries where there are no such weapons; and not to spread the nuclear-arms race to new spheres, including outer space;

To strive, step by step, on the basis of the principle of equal security, for the reduction of nuclear weapons, to the point of eliminating them in all their various forms.

The Soviet Union has made these principles the foundation of its policy. We are ready to reach agreement at any time with the other nuclear Powers on the joint recognition of norms of this kind and on imparting to them a mandatory character. I think that this would meet the fundamental interests not only of the participating countries but also of the peoples of the whole world.