Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the reply of M. S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to the National Council of the French Republican Association of War Veterans and Victims, published in the Soviet press on 6 May 1985.

The reply states the position of the USSR on a number of questions being discussed in the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

I should be grateful to you, Sir, if you would have this text circulated as an official document of the Disarmament Commission.

Yours respectfully,

(Signed) V. Issraelyan
Head of the Delegation of the USSR to the United Nations Disarmament Commission
REPLY OF M. S. GORBACHEV, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION, TO
THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE FRENCH REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION
OF WAR VETERANS AND VICTIMS

I have read with close attention your message expressing your interest in the
success of the current Soviet-United States negotiations at Geneva, which deal with
questions of the greatest importance for the fate of the world and for all mankind.

War veterans know better than anyone else what war is, and they work
persistently to prevent its recurrence. This is all the more true of war which
uses nuclear weapons, capable of incinerating our planet.

I can assure you: the Soviet Union went to Geneva with the firm intention of
engaging in constructive negotiations aimed at preventing the militarization of
outer space and at reducing strategic nuclear weapons and medium-range weapons.
Since it would be unnatural to conduct negotiations on the reduction of armaments
and at the same time increase armaments, we proposed that during the entire period
of negotiations the Soviet Union and the United States of America should declare a
moratorium on the production of outer-space strike weapons including research on
such weapons and on their testing and deployment and should put a freeze on their
offensive strategic weapons. At the same time, there should be an end to the
deployment of United States medium-range missiles in Europe and, correspondingly,
to the adoption of measures in response thereto by the Soviet Union.

In order to facilitate the search for agreement, we declared, as you know, on
7 April 1985, a unilateral moratorium on the deployment of our medium-range
missiles and have stopped carrying out other response measures in Europe that had
been provoked by the deployment of the new United States missiles. That is to say,
we have confirmed our desire to reach agreement by tangible actions which have
evoked favourable reactions throughout the world.

This is our consistent and principled policy. The USSR is earnestly striving
for disarmament and for the reduction of nuclear weapons. As early as 1982, our
country assumed an obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and called
upon the other nuclear Powers to follow its example. In 1983 the USSR declared a
unilateral moratorium on the orbiting of anti-satellite weapons for as long as
other States acted likewise. Both of these obligations remain in force today. We
also proposed that the USSR and the United States should reduce their strategic
offensive weapons by one quarter and more. But the United States Administration
gave no constructive reply to either of these initiatives.

Unfortunately even today, judging by the first stage of the Geneva
negotiations, the representatives of the United States still give no indication of
a desire to reach agreement. Something else is evident instead: the United States
is continuing its reckless arms race and actively attempting to extend it to
outer space.

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Success at Geneva requires the political good will on both sides to reach agreement, with strict observance of the principle of equality and equal security. Notwithstanding the complicated and tense world situation and the difficulties encountered at the Geneva negotiations, we remain soberly optimistic.

We hope that our negotiating partners will listen to the voice of the world's peoples which desire peace and an end to the arms race. We hope that common sense, political realism and a sense of responsibility for a peaceful future will prevail. We believe in the capacity of the world's peoples to defend their right to life.

In the next few days, Soviet citizens are conducting extensive observances of the fortieth anniversary of our Great Victory. They give due recognition to the contribution made by their allies in the anti-Hitler coalition to the defeat of the hateful power of fascism. We remember the heroic French patriots, soldiers and partisans, who had a significant share in our common Victory.

We are firmly convinced that there is no more important task in the world today than to avert from mankind the threat of nuclear extermination. And the more actively and resolutely the representatives of the public work for the fulfilment of that task, the greater will be the chances of success.