Unofficial translation

His Excellency
Ronald W.REAGAN,
The President of the United
States of America
Washington, D.C.

June 10, 1985

Dear Mr.President,

I noted the intention expressed in your letter of April 30 to share thoughts in our correspondence with complete frankness. This is also my attitude. Only in this manner can we bring to each other the essense of our respective approaches to the problems of world politics and bilateral relations. Saying this I proceed from the assumption that in exchanging views we shall look to the need to move forward on the key matters, otherwise one cannot count on a turn for the better in Soviet-American relations. I understand that you agree, too, that such a turn for the better is required.

To aim at a lesser goal, say, at simply containing tensions within certain bounds and trying to make it somehow from one crisis to another - is not, in my opinion, a prospect worthy of our two powers.

We paid attention to the fact that you share the view regarding the need to give an impetus to the process of normalizing our relations. It is not insignificant of itself. But to be candid: a number of points in your letter perplex and puzzle, and those are the points on which a special stress is made.

What I mean is the generalizations about the Soviet policy, contained in your letter, in connection with the deplorable incident with an American serviceman. As to the incident itself, we would like to hope that the explanations which were given by us were correctly understood by the American side.

Now turning to major problems. I also believe that agreement with regard to general principles alone is not sufficient. It is important that such agreement were also reflected in the practical actions of each side. I emphasize, precisely, each side, since it clearly follows from your letter that you see disparities between the principles and practice in the actions of the Soviet Union.

It is very far from reality. There is nothing corresponding to the facts in the assertion that the USSR in its policy allegedly does not wish to conduct affairs with the U.S. on the basis of equality and reciprocity. No matter what area of our relations is taken, it transpires from a really objective assessment that it is precisely the Soviet Union that comes out consistently for equality and reciprocity, does not seek advantages for itself at the expense of the legitimate interests of the U.S. And it was exactly when a similar approach was taken by the American side, too, that substantial agreements could be achieved.

It is not an accident that all agreements reached on the subject of arms limitation became possible only because the sides adhered in working them out to the principle of equality and equal security. At no point in time did the Soviet side demand more for itself. But as soon as the U.S. departed from that principle, the process of the arms limitation and reduction was ruptured. Regrettably, this remains to be the case at present, too.

If, nevertheless, the question of equality and reciprocity is to be raised as a matter of principle, then it is the Soviet Union that is surrounded by American military bases stuffed also by nuclear weapons, rather than the U.S. - by Soviet bases. Try to look at the situation through our eyes, then it will become clear, who can have a real, substantiated concern.

Take then practically any issue from the sphere of our bilateral relations, whether trade, or, for example, air or sea communication. Is it that the actual state of affairs in those cases determined by the Soviet Union being against equality and reciprocity? Quite the contrary: the low level of those relations is a direct consequence of the American side's policy compatible neither with conducting

affairs as equals, nor with reciprocity in the generally recognized meanings of these notions.

Or take the following aspect of the question with respect to principles and adherence to them. With regard to third countries, we impose neither our ideology, nor our social system on anybody. And do not ascribe to us what does not exist. If the question is to be raised without diplomatic contrivances as to who contributes to the international law and order and who acts in a different direction, then it appears that it is precisely the U.S. that turns out to be on the side of the groupings working against legitimate governments. And what about direct pressure on the governments whose policy does not suit the U.S.? There are enough examples of both on various continents.

I addressed these issues frankly and in a rather detailed manner not to embark upon the road of mutual recriminations, but, rather, in the hope that it willhelp you to understand correctly our approach to principles and their practical implementation, to appreciate our willingness to build our relations with the U.S. on the basis of equality and reciprocity in a positive and similar perception of these notions.

I think a lot about the shape the affairs between our countries can take. And I ever more firmly believe in a point I made in my previous letter: an improvement in the relations between the USSR and U.S. is possible. There is objective ground for that.

Of course, our countries are different. This fact cannot be changed. There is also another fact, however: when the leaders of both countries, as the experience of the past shows, found in themselves enough wisdom and realism to overcome bias caused by the difference in social systems, in ideologies, we cooperated successfully, did quite a few useful things both for our peoples and for all other peoples. Of course, differences and different views remained, but it was our interaction that was the determining factor. And it openned up confident, peaceful vistas.

I took note of the fact that you also express yourself in favor of each social system proving its advantages in peaceful competition. Yes, we proceed from the assumption that in this competition the USSR and U.S. will defend their ideals and moral values as each of our societies understands them. But it will result in nothing good, if the ideological struggle should be carried over into the sphere of relations between states. I believe, you understand, what I mean.

The main conclusion that naturally follows from the mutual recognition of the need for peaceful competition is that the attempts should be renounced to substitute the dispute of weapons for the dispute of ideas. One can hardly count on serious shifts in the nature of our relations so long as one side will try to gain advantages over the other on the path of the arms race, to talk with the other side from the "position of strength".

Mr.President, for understandable reasons the political leadership of both our countries must have a competent judgement regarding the existing and prospective weapon systems. It is extremely important to avoid miscalculations whose irreversible consequences will manifest themselves, if not today, then after some time.

In the past, a rigid, but at the same time quite fragile relationship was established between the strategic nuclear weapons and anti-ballistic missile systems. The only correct conclusion was made - the Treaty of indefinite duration to limit ABM systems was concluded. It is only due to that that it became possible at all to tackle as a practical matter the problem of the limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons.

The attempts to develop a large-scale ABM system inevitably set in train a radical destabilization of the situation. Even the factor of uncertainty as such will not only prevent any limitation of nuclear weapons, but will, instead, lead to their build-up and improvement. Therefore, when we resolutely raise the question and state that the militarization of space is impermissible, it is not propaganda and not a consequence of some misunderstanding or fear of "falling behind technologically". It is a result of a thorough analisys, of our deep concern about the future of relations between our countries, the future of peace.

There is also another aspect of the program of "stratigic defense", which remains as if in a shadow for the broad public. But not for responsible leaders and military experts. They talk in Washington about the development of a large-scale ABM system, but in fact a new strategic offensive weapon is being developed to be deployed in space. And it is a weapon no less dangerous by its capabilities than nuclear weapons. What difference does it make, what will be used in a first disarming strike-ballistic missiles or lasers. If there is a difference, it is that it will be possible to carry out the first strike by the new systems practically instantly.

So, from any point of view, already the very beginning of the work to implement this program is destabilizing, regardless even of its final results. And it is precisely for this reason that it cannot fail to serve as an impetus to a further upswing of the arms race.

I think you will agree that in matters affecting the heart of national security, neither side can or will rely on assurances of good intentions. Any weapon system is evaluated by its capabilities, but not by public statements regarding its mission.

All facts unambiguously indicate that the U.S. embarks upon the path of developing attack space weapons capable of performing purely offensive missions. And we shall not ignore that. I must say this frankly. I ought to confess that what you have said about the approach of the U.S. to the question of the moratorium on space and nuclear weapons, enhances our concern. The persistent refusal of the American side to stop the arms race cannot but put in question the intentions of the U.S.

And what is going on at the negotiations in Geneva? The American side is trying to substitute only a part of the agreed mandate for the negotiations for the whole of it. An integral element is being removed from the really agreed formula for the negotiations - the obligation to prevent an arms race in space, to consider and resolve all issues in their interrelationship. The American side has so far done nothing to bring agreement closer. On the subject of preventing an arms race in space the U.S. delegation did not present a single consideration at all. I emphasize, not a single one. What for should

after that one be surprised: why, indeed, there is no movement on the nuclear arms reduction?

I wish to mention, in passing, that the American representatives maintain - this point is also contained in your letter - that it is impossible to verify prohibition on scientific research. However, a different thing is involved: a federal program of research activities directly and specifically oriented towards the development of attack space weapons, a large-scale ABM system with space-based components. The very announcement of such a program is in clear contradiction with the ABM Treaty. (Incidentally, if one is to take the entire text of the "agreed statement" to the ABM Treaty, and not only its part which is quoted in your letter, it is easy to sea that it is aimed not at weakening, but at strengthening the central provision of the treaty - dealing with the sides' renunciation of the development of large-scale ABM systems).

As to the ascertions that the USSR is allegedly engaged in its own "large research program in the area of strategic defense", here, as Americans put it, apples are confused with oranges. The Soviet Union does nothing that would contravene the ABM Treaty, does not develop attack space weapons.

Thus, the question of verification is in this case a far-fetched question, if one is clearly to proceed from the premise that nothing can be done - no matter what names one can come up with for it - that is unambiguously prohibited by the ABM Treaty.

Mr.President, I would like to hope that you will have another close look at the problem of non-militarization of space, at its interrelationship with solving the problem of nuclear weapons, and from that angle - at the prospects for the Geneva negotiations. It is in this objective linkage that there lies a resolution of the problems of the limitation of nuclear arms, a real possibility to get down to their radical reduction and thereby to proceed to the liquidation of nuclear weapons as such. We shall not be able to avoid anyway having precisely the complex of these issues as a determining factor both for our relations and for the situation in the world as a whole. This follows from the special responsibility of our two countries.

I am convinced that we must and can be up to this responsibility. In this connection I note with satisfaction your words to the effect that our two countries have a common interest prevailing over other things - to avoid war. I fully agree with that.

Now, with regard to what other steps could be taken, among other things, to stimulate progress in Geneva. We are convinced that of very important - and practical - significance would be the cessation of all nuclear weapon tests. In this area a lot can be done by our two countries. Specifically, we propose the following practical steps. Putting into effect the up till now unratified Soviet-American treaties of 1974 and 1976. Coming to terms on the resumption of trilateral - with the participation of Britain - negotiations on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests and, acting vigorously, working towards their speedy and successful conclusion. Finally, we propose that the USSR and U.S. interact in carrying out such a specific and very substantial step on the part of all nuclear powers as a moratorium on any nuclear exposions would be. We are in favor of introducing such a moratorium as soon as possible.

The problem of prohibiting chemical weapons needs to be resolved. But its resolution should be sought realistically. I must say that the positions which the U.S. has so far had on a number of important aspects of this problem, do not meet this criterion. We would like the American side to pay attention to the proposals we have put forward. We agree that bilateral consultations between our representatives would be useful, for example, within the framework of the Geneva Conference on disarmament. It should be recognized, however, that the efforts which are being made in the U.S. for the chemical rearmament, above all, as concerns binary weapons, are not a favorable prerequisite at all for removing chemical weapons completely and forever from the military arsenals of states.

The state of things at the Stockholm Conference leaves one with an ambiguous impression. On the one hand, it would seem that there is common understanding regarding the need for an agreement on the basis of an optimum combination of major political obligations

and military-technical confidence-building measures. One the other hand, the Western representatives, the American representatives first of all, clearly do not hasten to fill this understanding with specific mutually acceptable - I emphasize, mutually acceptable- content. We are for having a substantial understanding, really helping to enhance confidence. Such are the instructions of our representatives. They are prepared to listen to constructive considerations which the American delegation may have. To put it briefly, we are for working towards a successful conclusion of the conference.

I would like, Mr.President, to draw your attention to the negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. Sometimes we hear from the American representatives that our proposals made last February "stimulate interest". But it does not show at all at the negotiations themselves. It would seem that reaching agreement on initial reductions of the Soviet and American forces in that area would be in your and in our interests, in the interests of a military relaxation in Europe. Could you look into it to see whether you might find it possible to advance things in this area?

One of the sourses of tension in the relations between the USSR and U.S. is a difference in the assessment of what is going on in the world. It seems that the American side frequently ignores the in-depth causes of events and does not take fully into account the fact that today a great number of states operate - and most actively, too - in world politics, each with its own face and interests. All this immeasurably complicates the general picture. A correct understanding of this would help avoid serious mistakes and miscal- culations.

In the past we used to have a positive experience of inter- action in lowering tensions in some areas, in preventing dangerous outbreaks. But it worked this way when the readiness was shown to take into account the legitimate interests of each other and the positions of all the sides involved in a certain situation.

We positively assess the agreement of the American side to have exchanges of views on some regional problems. We expect it to accept our proposal that a wider range of regional problems be the subject of such exchanges and that those exchanges look to seeking specific ways of settling tense situations. In this connection I took note of the readiness, expressed in your letter, to work together with the Soviet Union, so that the situation around Afganistan would be moving toward a peaceful settlement. I would like to have a more clear understanding of how the American side is seeing it. Such an opportunity is provided by the upcoming consultations of our experts.

However, our opinions in this matter as well will be based upon practical deeds of the U.S. From the point of view of achieving a political settlement, and not only from that point of view, we cannot accept what you say in your letter with respect to Pakistan. We perceive the behaviour of that country not only as not corresponding to the goal of a political settlement around Afganistan, but also as dangerous and provocative. We expect that the U.S., being closely linked with Pakistan and also taking into account its own interests, will exert restraining influence on it. The curtailing of its direct support to antigovernment armed formations intruding into Afganistan from Pakistan, would be a positive signal from the American side. In other words, the U.S. has the possibilities to confirm by actions its declared readiness to achieve a political settlement around Afganistan on the basis of a just solution of the questions connected with it and to eliminate tensions in this region as a whole. Such a mode of action will not be left unnoticed by our side and would clearly work toward straigthening out Soviet-American relations.

Some kind of movement seems to be discernable in the area of strictly bilateral relations between our countries. You, evidently, have noticed that we support this trend. However, there should be no misunderstanding concerning the fact that we do not intend and will not conduct any negotiations relating to human rights in the Soviet Union. We, as any other sovereign state, regarded and will regard these questions in accordance with our existing laws and regulations.

Let us, Mr.President, proceed from this in order not to aggravate additionally our relations. The development of our ties can be based only on mutual interest, equality and mutual benefit, respect for the rights and legitimate interests of each other.

We consider as positive the fact, that in some instances the once diversified structure of Soviet-American relations starts - although not very intensively, to put it outright - to be restored and to be filled with content. In particular, we consider useful the talks between our ministers of trade which took place in Moscow recently. We intend to look for mutually acceptable solutions in other areas as well, which constitute the subject of discussion between us, and to expand the range of such areas.

It is encouraging, that contacts, including those between parliaments of our two countries, have become more active recently As I have already said to the representatives of the U.S.Congress, we live in a time, when people shaping the policy of the USSR and the U.S., must necessarily meet, have contacts with each other. To speak in broad terms, we stand for building vigorously a bridge to mutual understanding and cooperation and for developing trust.

In conclusion, I would like to confirm my positive attitude to a personal meeting with you. I understand that you feel the same way. Our point of view on this matter was outlined by Andrey A.Gromyko to Mr.Schultz during their stay recently in Vienna. As to the place for holding it, I understand that there are motives, which make you prefer the meeting to be held in the U.S. But I have no less weighty motives due to which, taking into account the present state of Soviet-American relations, this variant is unrealistic.

Important international problems are involved and we should use the time to search for possible agreements which could be readied for the meeting. For our part, we are entirely for this.

Sincerely,

M.GORBACHEV