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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE
STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Letter dated 5 April 1983 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to
the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the transcript of the press conference for Soviet and foreign journalists, held in Moscow on 2 April 1983 by A. A. Gromyko, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, First Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this transcript as an official document of the General Assembly under items 62 and 66 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) R. OVINNIKOV
Acting Permanent Representative
of the USSR to the United Nations

* A/38/50.

ANNEX

Transcript of the press conference for Soviet and foreign
journalists given on 2 April 1983 by A. A. Gromyko, member
of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the
Communist Party of the Soviet Union, First Deputy Chairman
of the USSR Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign
Affairs of the USSR

At the press conference, Mr. Gromyko made the following statement:

I should like to speak on some questions concerning the international situation and the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

A kind of prompting for this press conference was provided by statements by the American President, mainly the latest ones. In them, he touched on a number of important issues of the international situation, the policy of the United States and the policy of the Soviet Union. In almost none of his speeches does the President miss the opportunity to speak about the policy of the Soviet Union. Some other questions that need to be elucidated have also accumulated.

What attracts attention above all in the recent speeches of the United States President and in his statement of 31 March and, I would say, in his April Fool's Day statement, if one has European time in mind? The President said that, in its current foreign policy, the United States and, to be more precise, the present United States Administration, is guided by lofty moral values, pursues the aim of protecting and defending the rights of the peoples, and that of adequately defending the interests of the United States of America in whatever corner of the world these interests are located.

But, of course, the United States President had and has his own understanding of the first, the second and the third. Lofty moral values cannot be defended by a State which is engaged in preparing war, especially a nuclear war. If one asks whether it is possible to defend lofty moral values and at the same time to engage in preparations for a nuclear war in whose flames hundreds and hundreds of millions of people would die, every honest person will answer in the negative. A Government engaged in preparations for nuclear war, which, as said correctly by many politicians and almost all scientists, would be a catastrophe for the civilization on Earth, has no right to speak about defending lofty moral values in connection with its foreign policy activities.

Speaking of the defence of American interests, it would be a good thing if this meant the defence of the legitimate interests of the United States of America, the defence of what really belongs to the United States. But on the whole few people can be found in the world today who would not be familiar with the way in which the formula "defence of American interests" is interpreted in Washington. It appears that any corner in the world where Washington believes that suitable conditions have been created for the United States to secure some moral, political and particularly, strategic military gains for itself is proclaimed to be an area

of American interests. Declarations are made that these should be defended with the utmost strength, including the force of arms. If I were to speak about all the specific facts, this would take a very long time.

Let each one think for instance, about the zone of the Persian Gulf and its adjoining waters. He will get a sufficiently convincing answer to the question how Washington understands "American interests", human rights, and the rights of peoples.

The Soviet people, our country and its leadership have never objected to the foreign policy of each State being imbued with the idea of protecting the rights of the peoples and, consequently, protecting human rights. Since the days of Lenin, this requirement of defending the rights of peoples, human rights, has been an integral part of Soviet foreign policy. But we also know how this formula, which is good in itself, is exploited when politics are dominated by other interests. We know how the genuine content of this formula of protecting the rights of peoples, human rights, is emasculated and replaced by other requirements, those meeting the purposes of a particular Power - its political, military-strategic and, last but not least, economic purposes.

What would one like to say here about our foreign policy? The foreign policy of the Soviet Union has been determined by the Congresses of our party, a ruling party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and by decisions of its Central Committee. It is reflected in many actions, including the major ones, which, I would think, are known to all. It is reflected in the speeches of Soviet leaders and, above all, in the speeches of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, on specific issues, with concrete proposals. I think you will recall these speeches.

Soviet foreign policy is a policy of peace, a policy of friendship between peoples; it is a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States; it is a policy aimed at easing tension, at defusing the international situation. Our policy aims at reversing the insane arms race. It is necessary, above all, to find ways to limit and reduce arms, and then to find ways to destroy arms.

In the West it is now not customary for some reason to speak and write about the Soviet proposal on general and complete disarmament. I should like to emphasize that the Soviet Union after the end of the Second World War submitted two proposals, which will go down in golden letters in the annals of history and, it can be said, have already done so.

The first proposal is that an international convention be concluded on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons for all time. The second - the Soviet Union put forward a programme of general and complete disarmament. When it became clear that other States intend to delay the solution of disarmament questions under various pretexts - the need to specify proportions, how to approach the reduction of armaments of this or that type, how to combine all that - that is, when under the pretext of complexity they started thwarting the solution of these issues, the Soviet Union proposed: let us stop arguing, let us work for general and complete

disarmament. Then our partners began talking about how general and complete disarmament could be effected if there was no confidence that it was being effected in reality. In other words, they raised the question of verification, believing that the Soviet Union could be pressed here and made to feel, so to speak, uncomfortable.

In response the Soviet Union proposed general and complete verification - general and complete disarmament combined with general and complete verification. This proposal of ours remains in force to this day. I repeat, in the West it is not customary to write about that, and it is a pity. However, it is more or less clear why they do not want to write about that. For it is difficult to speak of the significance of general and complete disarmament, of general and complete verification, and at the same time to pursue a policy of war preparations, to continue the arms race at full steam, to inflate military budgets.

I recalled two major Soviet initiatives. Now I should like to emphasize that recently too the Soviet Union proposed steps which nobody has the right to ignore without testifying to his unconditional, open - I repeat open - adherence to militarist policy. What are these steps?

Firstly, the Soviet Union has unilaterally assumed the obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. It did not wait for the consent of other Powers to that. And this was a resolute and bold step. I think that everyone present here will probably agree. The Soviet Union takes upon itself the obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, when the other nuclear Powers did not even move a finger to advance in that direction. Yes, this is our bold and peace-loving step. In the West they are not keen at all to speak of this. That is a wrong attitude.

Secondly, the Soviet Union and its friends and allies in the Warsaw Treaty decided at a meeting of the Political Consultative Committee to offer to the NATO countries to conclude a treaty. On what? On the non-use of nuclear weapons and the non-use of conventional weapons - that is, on the non-use of any force at all in relations between the States of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty. Why was the proposal made in this form? Because there was a lot of demagogy in the West to the effect that the Soviet Union allegedly may launch an attack on a State or a group of States, not necessarily with nuclear weapons but by using conventional weapons. I repeat: this, of course, was demagogy. But those fabrications could mislead ill-informed people who are not conversant with foreign policy matters.

The proposals put forward by the Warsaw Treaty countries demolish such arguments. We are prepared to sit at the negotiating table with the NATO countries even today and discuss this issue, and, better still, to sign a corresponding document with reciprocal commitments not to use force against one another.

How do the countries of the North Atlantic alliance react to this proposal of ours? Most answer us in the sense that the proposal is being studied. So much time has already passed, and it is still being studied.

Not so long ago, I visited the Federal Republic of Germany. Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher also stated that the proposal was being studied. The Governments of other countries also say so. The American leaders are reacting somewhat differently. Although officially they do not give a final answer in the negative, and are refraining from doing this, we have the impression that this is a tactical consideration. From the occasional hints that are given, one can conclude that this proposal is not to Washington's liking. It is regrettable if that is so.

I should like to express the hope that this proposal of the Warsaw Treaty countries will be met with understanding. If there are any questions for us, we are ready to get together and examine them. Perhaps they will disappear or be taken into account. Perhaps there are some amendments? We are prepared to discuss them together. It may be that they - or some of them - will be accepted. Perhaps there is a proposal to improve some wording concerning the parties' obligations? We are prepared to exchange views on this point as well. As a result of the exchange of views, a common language on the treaty may eventually be found.

Comrades and gentlemen,

There are both the former and the latter here. If there is a will for peace, there can be no convincing arguments against the proposal for the conclusion of such a treaty. Just think: it is a proposal abolishing war and the use of force by one State against another or by one group of States against another group. Can there be any reasonable objections to this proposal if people want to live in peace? No, there can be no reasonable objections to it.

We appeal both to Governments and, naturally, to the peoples to give serious consideration to the proposal we are talking about, which reflects the will of the peoples of the socialist States. This proposal, we are confident, will also be written, in golden letters, in the history of international relations.

Some questions concerning nuclear arms have now moved to the forefront, questions concerning nuclear arms in the global sense, i.e. strategic armaments, and nuclear weapons on the European plane, that is, medium-range weapons.

These questions are now the focal point of international life. The peoples, political and public figures in Europe, in the United States, in Canada and in other countries literally live by them. The peoples and politicians understand what these questions are, what their impact is, what the possible solution or non-solution of these questions is and what follows therefrom.

I want to dwell on questions concerning nuclear weapons in Europe in connection with the talks taking place between the Soviet Union and the United States. What is our view of their immediate prospects and of the present situation in this field? To begin with, we should like to stress the fallacy of the assertions made in Washington that, generally speaking, serious talks are being conducted in Geneva. There is presumably nothing to fear there and the only thing is to pressure the Soviet Union, and to strike a tougher posture, and then everything will be all right. They even claim: the more we pressure the Soviet Union, the better the chances for reaching an understanding. This line is apparent in the specific proposals made at the talks.

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The statements made in Washington contain many untruths, false assertions, exaggerations and misrepresentations as regards factual data. It is necessary to dwell on this matter. To begin with, it is necessary to examine the assertion - which has been formulated particularly explicitly in the latest statements of the United States President - that his proposals on medium-range missiles represent the road to agreement, to peace. No, this is wrong, this is not a road to peace or to agreement. The gulf between agreement and these proposals will be even wider. Does everyone know that the President leaves aside whole components which are enormous both in importance and in scope? They relate to aviation, to aircraft capable of delivering nuclear weapons. They are not to be found in the statements and discourses of the American President. Neither politicians nor military leaders have the right to exclude this component from talks and agreements. And what difference does it make to people what they can die from - a nuclear warhead delivered by a missile or a nuclear warhead brought by a plane? What was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was dropped from planes. And today planes can deliver even more horrendous weapons. How is it possible therefore to exclude this entire component?

The delegations in Geneva have attempted to discuss this question. They tried to approach it. Nothing, however, came out of that discussion. Why? Because the United States representatives had instructions not to agree on that question. I shall cite an example. It is said: you see, there are such medium-range aircraft that can deliver not only nuclear weapons. They may serve a military, and a peaceful purpose. And for this reason, it is alleged, they cannot be included in the number of nuclear weapon delivery vehicles. This would be the same situation as if someone were to characterize the most powerful and formidable ballistic missile, say, a land-based one, like this: it may deliver a nuclear warhead, but it can also be used for meteorological purposes, and so it is better not to include it in the number of those that deliver nuclear warheads. Absurd? Yes, totally absurd. But it is essentially this position that is stated by official representatives expressing the opinion of the United States Government.

Next. The United States has aircraft-carriers, carrier-borne aviation. According to data which are widely known, at least six American aircraft-carriers are especially fond of Europe. They are staying in the waters of Europe, in the Mediterranean, or near Europe - beyond the line which separates the European waters from the non-European waters and which they can cross in a matter of minutes. They are a tremendous force. Each aircraft-carrier has about forty aircraft capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Yes, nuclear weapons.

So should we, the Soviet Union, close our eyes to this and not include the carrier-borne aircraft in the count? This is absurd. The intention of the Government, which proposes that we should close our eyes and not see this, is not serious. Therefore, any proposal which excludes from the count a whole, we would say a dreadful, component of the nuclear weapons delivery vehicles - such aircraft - is not serious. And it is impossible to look for agreement on this basis.

There is a second important element of the picture, and it is necessary to know it to avoid confusion. There are so many words spoken and statements made

without any knowledge of the specifics. It is necessary to have some minimum knowledge. Otherwise, I repeat, one can get confused even without wishing it.

The United Kingdom and France have nuclear systems - missiles, nuclear missiles. The Soviet Union suggests that they be counted in the course of the talks. It is impossible to close our eyes to them, to believe they are non-existent, and only to seek agreement on the American systems. Those missiles are a part of the common forces of the North Atlantic alliance. Many statements have been made on this score. There are hundreds - thousands if you want - of statements, most solemn ones, to the effect that the nuclear forces of the United Kingdom and France are an integral part of the nuclear forces of NATO as a whole. It is proposed that we seek agreements, leaving these nuclear forces aside. This is not a serious proposal. Imagine that a terrible tragedy has occurred and that, say, a nuclear-tipped British missile is in flight. Should it carry the tag "I am British"? If it delivers its charge, people will die just as they would die from any other missile. Or imagine a French missile flying. Perhaps it will also carry a tag saying "I am French, I should not have been included in the count"? This would be absurd. People will be killed by that missile as by any other. That is why these missiles, the British and the French alike, should be included in the total count. This is the only approach substantiated from the political, military-strategic, scientific and technical points of view - however you regard it, the only correct approach. It seems that everything is perfectly clear here. However, the United States stand has not up to now been changing, and it has not altered judging by the latest statements of the United States President.

Furthermore, and this is also explicit in the above statements, the demand is made: if any reduction in European missiles is to be discussed, you should bear in mind that it is not enough to reduce and abolish these missiles in Europe. It is necessary to eliminate missiles of this class in Asia too. A tall order! It is necessary to say that this and already this alone makes an understanding impossible. Why should we drag Asia into this?

We allow - this was mentioned by Yuri Andropov in making the relevant proposal, which is well known - that we may withdraw part of the missiles from Europe, from the European zone, to Asia if an agreement were reached. This is our business and our right. And we are prepared to install them at sites from which they will not reach Western Europe. We have stated this at the talks, and the United States Administration knows it. We have said, I repeat: we shall withdraw them to sites from which these missiles will not reach Western European countries. But we are told: no, this is not enough. The arguments of the United States Administration and of the President personally boil down to a demand that these missiles should be eliminated too. This demand alone already precludes an understanding.

These missiles pose no threat to the European countries. Then why are they needed? The Soviet Union needs them to ensure its security. It is common knowledge what a circle of American military bases surrounds the Soviet Union. Japan and the waters around it are filled with nuclear weapons and carriers for them. Okinawa is a huge base of nuclear weapons. South Korea is a huge base or, rather, a complex of bases of nuclear weapons. The Indian Ocean, especially the

Diego Garcia base, is bristling with nuclear weapons reaching the Soviet Union. The Persian Gulf and the adjoining waters are filled with nuclear weapons. And please note, I ask you to concentrate your attention, what is at issue is medium-range weapons. All these weapons reach Soviet territory. Moreover - and if someone is not conversant with what I shall say, it will be especially interesting for him to know - these weapons have within their range the whole of Siberia, the whole of the Asian part of the Soviet Union, even its northernmost part - the Taimyr peninsula. And reference here is being made only to medium-range weapons; not to the United States strategic arms which exist and are deployed in the same areas that have been mentioned. Strategic arms are regulated by another agreement, an interim agreement, while it operates. The sides have agreed to extend the operation of that agreement. Consequently, we are taking into account only medium-range weapons. And so it is they, these weapons, that keep within their range the whole of the Asian territory of the Soviet Union. Does the Soviet Union not, may one ask, have the right, for the purposes of defence, to have something to match those weapons? It does have the right.

They do not speak about all this publicly in the West; they do not tell the truth to the people. And if the people had been told the truth on the first, on the second and on the third questions, then we are confident that people who are unenlightened today would have changed their opinion and most certainly not in favour of the United States Administration, which is ignoring facts. But they simply do not talk about these facts; the facts are mentioned neither in the press, nor on radio or television. They are being hushed up. If you take the United States, there from dawn till late at night people hear only one thing: the Soviet Union is a threat, it is reluctant to conclude agreements, it submits proposals which do not meet the United States line. And this - instead of providing people with factual material to ponder over. This is not being done. Let this sound as a sharp statement, but one cannot help saying that in general it is deceptive propaganda that is being fed to the people, and the picture that forms in these countries in the minds of the people, who are ill-informed through no fault of theirs, is totally distorted.

As to the assertion that the more pressure exerted on the Soviet Union, the better the chances for an agreement, it is not serious at all either. To some extent, it may perhaps, be explained by a lack of knowledge about the Soviet Union, a lack of knowledge, if you want, about our character.

In short, the United States proposal is not serious. It is not designed to create opportunities for an agreement with the Soviet Union. This is what we think. This is why we call, but do not know how they will react in Washington, for a more objective approach to this question, renouncing lopsidedness, taking into account all factors, taking into account the legitimate security interests of the Soviet Union and adopting a policy of reaching an understanding, of bringing positions closer.

The policy currently pursued at the Geneva talks by the United States is not a policy of rapprochement. It is a policy of moving away from agreement, complicating the situation, whipping up the arms race still more, worsening relations with the Soviet Union even further, securing an even faster growth of

military budgets, and containing the forces which favour finding a common language with the Soviet Union and solving the problems of disarmament, to an even greater degree. By the way, once in a while it is alleged in Washington, mainly by Administration representatives, that the movement in the United States for a nuclear freeze has been inspired by the Soviet Union or may be guided from the Soviet Union. Whatever is alleged on this score, we should point out most emphatically the absurdity of such speculation, the absurdity of such statements. This movement is an American, spontaneous movement. This movement is based on the desire to facilitate efforts to find a common language with the Soviet Union and to contain the forces preparing war, the militarist forces. The Soviet Union does not have anything to do with this, and we ourselves can only sympathize with this movement because we also think that war must be averted and that it is necessary to seek agreement and understanding on these issues. And neither the movement nor we ourselves can be accused of there being a common centre, for which either the Soviet Union or the leaders of this movement should bear responsibility. Let us hope that these reproaches will be short-lived, that they will be dispelled and that people who realize, so to speak, instinctively what does and what does not correspond to the interests of the American people will in an even more effective way, in an even louder voice make their presence known and felt in the political life of the United States of America.

Thus, we can say in conclusion, bearing in mind the latest statements, mainly those by the United States President, that the "interim option", as the President called his proposition, is unacceptable, unacceptable for the following reasons.

First, it does not take into account the British and French medium-range nuclear systems, including 162 missiles.

Secondly, it does not take account of many hundred American nuclear-capable aircraft based in Western Europe and on aircraft carriers.

Thirdly, the Soviet medium-range missiles in the Asian part of the USSR would also be subject to liquidation, although they do not have any relation to Europe.

On the whole, while at present NATO has a 50 per cent superiority in medium-range nuclear warheads in Europe, in case of the implementation of the "interim option", so called by the President, NATO would have almost 2.5 times as many such warheads as the Soviet Union.

This is in short our attitude towards the so-called "interim proposal" of the American Administration. In any case, we have no doubt that Washington did not expect any different reaction from us.

Before concluding my statement, I should like to draw the attention of those present to two facts without which the picture would probably be incomplete - at least in terms of the understanding of the situation as a whole by those who supply information to the population, to people today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. It would be useful for everyone to remember always that our weapons, meaning medium-range weapons in Europe, cannot reach the territory of the United States. Such a task is not even set. As for the American weapons planned for deployment in Europe, each missile can reach the territory of the Soviet Union.

This is a geographical factor. Whom does it favour? It favours the United States to the detriment of the Soviet Union. But we do not ask for any compensation and do not raise this question, although we could if a balance were to be worked out scrupulously and accurately.

Furthermore, a missile is a missile. Missiles fly. Well, the time it takes for a United States missile to reach Soviet territory from Western European territory is about one sixth or one seventh of the flight time of a missile from the territory of the Soviet Union to the United States, in the event of a nuclear tragedy that would affect the whole of mankind. Consequently, from this viewpoint too, the Soviet Union, if one takes a scrupulous and a more accurate attitude towards building a corresponding equation, in order to preserve the principle of equality, would also have the right to raise the question of compensation. We do not, however, raise this question; we take this factor outside the brackets, so to speak. Why? In the interests of facilitating the way to agreement. Besides, we take into account the fact that, if an agreement were reached, then obviously steps would be taken in the direction of further, more radical cuts and perhaps - who knows? - even the total destruction of missile weapons. And so I also ask that this fact be borne in mind.

Here we show flexibility and, if you wish, even magnanimity, in the interests of agreement, bearing in mind, as I have already said, the objective for which all must strive - peace, the total destruction of nuclear weapons and the use of nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes and only for the benefit of mankind.

Our policy in questions of both medium-range and strategic weapons, if one goes beyond the framework of Europe, is to preserve at all costs the equality, the principle of equality and equal security that has evolved over many years. One can say that life itself has led to the principle of equality. This is not the result of just some office work.

The policy of the United States aims at breaking, destroying this principle. We shall be doing everything - whether or not an agreement is reached - to preserve this principle. If it were violated as a result of actions of the United States Government and of other NATO countries, the Soviet Union would indisputably - there can be no two ways about it and no doubt in the mind of anyone - adopt such measures as are required to protect its legitimate interests, so that this principle could continue to operate. And we will do this. For this, we have enough material and intellectual possibilities - there can be no doubt on this score. Yes, we think that, properly speaking, those who bear the blame for the present situation also know this.

Mr. Gromyko then answered questions from correspondents.

Question. It looks as if the people in Washington, as usual, counted on the USSR becoming "more tractable" as the end of the year, when it is planned to start deploying the US missiles in Europe, draws nearer. What can be said on this score?

Answer. This is an incorrect and profoundly erroneous view. It betrays a predilection for the tactical side, which indicates that those speaking in this vein give little thought to the substance of the matter at hand. This just cannot

be the case. On the contrary, the United States and the Soviet Union will be even further from agreement than is the case now. For agreement to be reached, it is necessary to accommodate the legitimate interests of both sides; it is necessary to observe the principles of equality. Mass media will do good service if they tell the truth about this.

Question. What will be the response of the Soviet Union, if the Americans do deploy Pershing and cruise missiles, and will not the deployment of these missiles in some manner be similar to the Caribbean crisis of 1962?

Answer. I have already said in my statement that, if the missiles were installed, and if the agreement were disrupted, the Soviet Union would try to see that in material - and in other - respects its interests were safeguarded. We shall not allow the equality or balance - call it what you wish - to be upset. And our words will be matched by our deeds. We have such possibilities. We have proved this repeatedly. But this will be the worst, a forced measure on our part. Our first, preferred position is to solve the issue on the basis of an understanding with the United States, with NATO.

Question. The Soviet Union is advocating the principle of equality and equal security. The American side, for its part, speaks about the principle of "equal rights and limits". What is the difference here?

Answer. If you asked the United States representatives who are engaged in the negotiations about the meaning of the formula "equal rights and limits", they would not give you an answer. They would make a feeble statement, because they themselves do not have a precise idea of what it is. One can guess that the central issue here is the question of the British and French missiles. By resorting to this formula, they wish to steer clear of this question. This follows from occasional remarks made and from the logic, so to speak, of the negotiations. But this formula has been worked out specifically in order to befuddle the issue. The mathematically accurate formula - which is also precise politically and acceptable in military-strategic respects - is equality and equal security, and accommodation of all factors. This is a simple, but scientifically-based formula.

Question. You recently declared that the Western public would be labouring under a delusion if it thinks that the talks in Geneva will continue despite the start of the deployment of new missiles. Does this mean that the Soviet Union will discontinue the talks as soon as the first American missile is deployed?

Answer. I must tell you that this will be a fundamentally negative fact for Europe and for the world as a whole. And the situation will be such that we shall have to examine it in the most careful way with consideration of all circumstances - I emphasize this, with consideration of all circumstances - and take a corresponding decision.

Question. In his recent speeches, President Reagan described the Soviet Union as an "empire of evil" and a "centre of evil". How do you evaluate these pronouncements?

Answer. Yes, we know that the American President indulges in formulations of this kind. One day he organizes or predicts a "crusade"; the next day he proclaims

the Soviet Union and the socialist countries to be a "centre of evil". But he is not the first in history to resort to such methods.

There were figures in history who predicted even the collapse of socialism. But socialism still marches on its way. It marches on and grows ever stronger. The President's predictions will not add anything to the authority of American foreign policy, let alone shake socialism or our foreign policy in even the slightest measure. In our conviction, since the Second World War, the star of the Soviet Union, our banner and the banner of our foreign policy have never shone so brightly for the whole world - in the North, in the South, in the West and in the East - as today.

And could the elimination of colonialism have been possible at all without the Soviet Union and without our victory in the war against the Fascist aggressors? No, no knowledgeable, thinking and sensible person will say this.

We believe that what has been done by socialism, by the socialist States and first and foremost by the Soviet Union, is a rock-hard basis for the future. It well serves our people, who are making progress in fulfilling their plans. It well serves as an example for mankind as a whole. We do not interfere in the internal affairs of other States - this is one of the principles of our foreign policy. But an example is an example. One cannot eliminate it even if one comes with a cross.

You know, these strong words and insults which the people in Washington use and are fond of using do not broaden possibilities for United States foreign policy but only show the threshold of decency which Washington has now accepted in doing business with other States, particularly with the Soviet Union. But business is not done in this way.

Imagine that responsible representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union meeting at the negotiating table will exchange these formula. One side will try to prove that the other is a "centre of evil" while the other, of course, will counter and seek to give as good as it gets. What sort of talks will they be?

If anyone got down today to compiling tables of evil, I assure you that such a table for the United States would be very long. We receive appeals for protection of their legitimate interests from those who are injured by the United States and whose territories - territories of dozens of countries - are designated by the United States as a zone of its vital interests, all but its backyard or lake. We receive appeals from them. Does this mean that they appeal to the "centre of evil"? Nothing of the kind. Does it mean that the "centre of evil" has submitted at the United Nations, the proposal that colonialism, the colonial system, be abolished? No, this was proposed by a socialist State, the Soviet Union.

It was the "centre of evil" that proposed as long ago as 1946 the signing of an international convention to declare nuclear weapons incompatible with human conscience, according to which nuclear weapons should be banned and nuclear energy turned to peaceful purposes, to the benefit of mankind? Was it the "centre of evil"? No, it was the Soviet socialist State.

Is it the "centre of evil" that now suggests reductions in military budgets and the adoption of a commitment on the non-use of force among States, with a view

to preventing war and building relations on the basis of peace? No, it is the State which is the vehicle of a policy of peace and friendship among nations. We do not impose our ideology on anyone. Our ideology is a reflection of what is objectively taking place in human society. Our policy is an open book and everyone can read it.

If I continued in this vein, perhaps, someone might say that this is propaganda. But there is propaganda and propaganda. You will perhaps disagree, all of you present here, if you all are called merely propagandists, but you are propagandists in a sense because you supply information to people. But there is information and information. Information deluding people and information opening their eyes. The latter is truthful information. The strength of our policy lies in truth. That is why the exercises of the President or anyone else in sticking labels such as "centre of evil" and choosing other derogatory words of this kind are futile exercises. They are not lasting either. Perhaps, these rhetorical exercises may sparkle for someone standing or sitting next to the President but they will inevitably wither.

We take pride in the role played by the Soviet State and we know that most of the countries of the world appreciate this role at its just value. We also take pride in the fact that we have associates - if you wish, allies in this sense - in the great struggle of the peoples for peace and against nuclear war.

Question. What is concealed behind the United States proposal about a "global" limitation of medium-range missiles?

Answer. What is meant is probably the United States proposal or demand regarding elimination of missiles in the Asian part of the Soviet Union. I have already referred to that topic. The United States has put forward a proposal that Soviet medium-range missiles be eliminated not only in the European part, but also in the Asian part. And if we try to translate all this into the language of specifics, this would mean that the United States would then be left with almost two and a half times more warheads. Why do I say warheads, not missiles? Because warheads give a more precise, mathematically more accurate expression of the yield of nuclear weapons.

Question. As I gather from your answer to one of the questions, you actually entertain no hope for a possibility of reaching agreement on medium-range missiles before the end of this year. Do I interpret the situation correctly?

And another question which I would like to ask you: does your recent appointment as First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR mean that you will now give less time to foreign affairs, and what will be your additional responsibilities in this connection?

Answer. I would answer the first question as follows: if the position of the United States of America remains as it was announced by the President, then there are no chances for an agreement. That is why it would be good if the United States Administration were to adopt a more objective position, meeting the need to preserve the principle of equality and equal security, and fully taking into account the legitimate interests of the Soviet Union and of all the States of the Warsaw Treaty.

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As for your second question, it concerns me personally and I could decline to answer it. But I will say the following: I very much doubt that there will be less work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I think, rather, that there will be more to do and that it will deal with the greater volume of work, to put it in short, co-ordination of foreign policy activity.

Question. Do you think that an improvement in Soviet-American relations is possible despite the United States position? Do you believe that agreement can be reached at all between the USSR and the United States within the next few years?

Answer. You have asked a very easy question. I can say only one thing: we should like relations between the United States and the Soviet Union to improve. Numerous statements have been made on our part to this effect from the rostrums of Party Congresses, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the plenary meetings of the Central Committee. Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov has also spoken on this subject on more than one occasion. I repeat, we would like this. But to all appearances, the American Administration does not want any improvement in relations with the Soviet Union. It wants the Soviet Union to make fundamental concessions to the detriment of its legitimate interests, legitimate and well-founded interests. This is not so and will never be. That is why we call on the United States to take a more objective approach to questions of Soviet-American relations and to understand that normal or, even better, good relations between the United States and the Soviet Union are in the interests not only of the international situation as a whole but also of the American people. We have already said on more than one occasion that this would be in the interests of the Soviet people.

It is necessary first and foremost to change for the better the character of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States to preclude the possibility of war, and primarily nuclear war. We stand for this. The United States Administration does not want it. It is worthwhile to recall that there was a time when we were allies in war and therefore found a common basis for co-operation, although at that time too we were States with different social systems, with different ideologies. But we believe, despite these differences of social systems and ideologies, that our two Powers with their huge military potential can normalize their relations. We believe that the peoples of both countries, the Soviet Union and the United States, could only breathe freer as a result.

Question. Could you tell us about the character of the proposals which are reported to have been made to the Chinese last month to facilitate the normalization of Soviet-Chinese relations?

Answer. I shall give a very general outline. Consultations have begun between China and the Soviet Union. These consultations will cover many questions. They have not yet gone far enough to permit definite conclusions, particularly on major questions. The parties have agreed to continue consultations. The atmosphere during the consultations is on the whole normal. The consultations will be continued. We believe it is a good thing that they have begun, a good thing that they will continue. Time will show what emerges from them. We are in favour of normal relations with China.

Question. Washington continues to claim that the Soviet Union does not honour the unilateral moratorium announced by it on the deployment of medium-range missiles in the European part of the territory of the USSR. What could you say on this subject?

Answer. My answer will be short. These are misleading statements. The Soviet Union matches its words with deeds. This holds true for the case in point as well.

Question. Yuri Andropov has said that there are solutions which will not impinge on the interests of either side. However, your position does not seem flexible. Will the Soviet Union agree to any new missile deployment?

Answer. We have stated our opinion in the course of the talks. We have heard the opinion of the United States of America. I have dwelt on the basic lines of both our policy and American policy in these talks. What is known about American policy today precludes the possibility of an understanding. We do not know what will happen tomorrow. But the visible, foreseeable prospect is not very good, if only because the American position already today proceeds from the assumption that the missiles must be deployed according to plan. Must be deployed - they repeat this every day, every hour. One would like to see changes for the better in the United States stand. But they are not yet to be seen.

Question. The United States, in the words of President Reagan, regards effective verification as one of the principles basic to any arms control agreements. What is the Soviet Union position of principle on this question?

Answer. I should like to stress most emphatically that for the Soviet Union verification has never been a bottle-neck in the compliance with agreements, or in negotiations on agreements, although we have heard from the other side very many demagogic statements on this score, especially outside the context of the negotiating table. Where verification is necessary, we are for verification; where there is no need for special verification - well, then, this means that it must not be there and there is no need for it.

Here I shall stress that many people perhaps do not know that, since we are talking about several treaties - among others, about the SALT-2 Treaty, which, as a result of the actions of the American side, failed to be ratified and to enter into force - much was based on bilateral national verification. Bilateral in the sense that each side or, more precisely, both sides acted in this question in their own manner. Bilateral does not mean joint. What is meant here is that each side should use its national technical facilities. And there were no serious objections. This suited both sides.

It is sometimes said that there are doubts (incidentally, it is not directly stated that there are indeed violations) about the observance of some commitments or other assumed by the Soviet Union. Well, as regards doubts, we have also voiced our doubts to the United States Government on more than one occasion. By way of proof, I shall cite one case.

We noticed all of a sudden that certain objects had been hidden from observation in the United States for some time. We raised this issue. We were

told; indeed, they had been hidden - because of the weather. A month passed, then another, even more. Certain objects are hidden, but they should not be hidden so that our facilities can see them. An understanding was reached to this effect. We again raised the issue. We were answered: you know, it has been raining, we have to hide them. Well, of course, we asked half seriously, half ironically: but when are your rains going to stop at last? It has been raining for several months; is another Deluge imminent, or what?

It was an American trick, of course. But our reaction was on the whole calm. There were other cases, but we do not want to exploit them for propaganda purposes. Something of the kind may happen. But there has been nothing serious on our part, and we do not intend to allow anything to happen. It is not the manner of our policy to record one thing in a treaty and to act differently. If the United States acted in a similar manner, it would be a good thing.

Question. How do you assess the present situation in the Near East? How do you assess Washington's reaction to the Soviet Government statement concerning the essence of Israel's aggressive designs against Syria? Have there been any contacts lately between the USSR and the United States concerning the situation in that region?

Answer. There have been no systematic contacts between the USSR and the United States on this issue. If there are contacts, usually there are mutual representations. Sometimes the sparks fly. It would be better, of course, to conduct matters in a different manner, in a calmer form. But one has to speak the truth, perhaps an unpleasant one, and in a rather sharp form. How can one speak softly about what is now taking place in the Near East, in particular in Lebanon? What nerves and frame of mind do people need so as not to perceive what is taking place there in a most lively and vigorous manner, and with much alarm. For there was a time when, in connection with Israel's aggressive action in Lebanon, statements were made in Washington that the United States would not send its troops to Lebanon. A certain amount of time passed. Other statements were made: indeed, the United States might send troops, but only for a limited period if it is asked to do so. Some more time passed and contingents of American troops appeared in Lebanon. Again official statements were made on the part of the United States Administration: indeed, there are American troops in Lebanon, and Washington has no intention for the time being of withdrawing them and is not scheduling any date for the withdrawal. And Washington is already firmly present with its contingents in Lebanon. Or it is also said: indeed, the Americans will depart with their military contingents from Lebanon, but Israel too must withdraw from there, as must all other foreign troops. But Israel says: I have no intention of leaving. Then Washington says that, since Israel is not planning to leave, it is not planning to leave either. It is not difficult for these two partners to agree on a division of roles between them. Every objective outside observer draws the correct conclusion that in reality there is collusion here.

The Soviet Union advocates the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the territory of Lebanon. All of them. Syria also advocates this. But Israel wants to consolidate its hold on a part of Lebanon and there is actually a desire to tear Lebanon apart as a State.

Take the neighbouring region - a huge region encompassing 19 countries. These States are of special interest to the United States. The strategic interests of the United States, as is declared in Washington, extend to these States. Even a special American command has been set up for this region. Among the aims pursued by Washington, there is also the aim of interfering even when internal events take place in these countries that do not accord with American interests. The Near East is included in this zone.

If we are to approach this from the standpoint of requirements of objectivity and decency, what rights can there be here, what lofty morals, what lofty moral principles? If some internal social changes will take place in these countries, Washington arrogates to its itself the right to interfere, including by its armed forces. What do you call this? I would not like to use too strong words.

We sympathize with the Arab cause and favour peace in the Near East; we also favour Israel existing as a State. No one can reproach us for having changed our position with regard to Israel as a State. When the fate of Palestine was being decided, the Soviet Union voted in favour of the establishment of an Israeli State side by side with a Palestinian one. This continues to be our view today as well. We do not share the view of the extremist Arab circles in favour of abolishing Israel. This is an unrealistic and unfair view. But Israel should be a peaceable State, it should have good relations with its neighbours. We favour such a State of Israel. Regrettably, what Israel has been doing for many years now merely cuts into the political and historical basis which was generally upheld by all those who advocated the establishment of Israel as an independent State. When we voted for the establishment of Israel, we voted for a peaceable Israel and not for an aggressive Israeli State. We would like healthy and realistic tendencies to prevail at long last in the politics, the political and social life of Israel, tendencies in favour of Israel living in peace with its neighbours.

We support the Arabs, support their just cause. We support the Palestinians and believe that they have the right to establish their independent Palestinian Arab State, even if it is not large.

Question. It is known that last February the Soviet delegation to the Vienna talks on the mutual reductions of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe submitted on behalf of the socialist countries a series of concrete proposals aimed at breaking the deadlock at the Vienna talks. What was the reaction of the other participating countries and what are the future prospects for the Vienna talks?

Answer. The prospects are bad. It is felt that Washington, London and the other Western participants, our partners in the talks, are not giving serious attention to them and that their positions are firmly cemented. We have approached them from different sides on several occasions, made proposals and displayed flexibility in the hope that we would eventually manage to move them. Not long ago - only a couple of months ago - we made proposals on the overall strength of troops. We proposed a way to simplify the reaching of an understanding by brushing aside all secondary factors. Regrettably, the Western participants have not shown much interest in this, although no official answer has yet been given. In general, certain Western capitals have rather stolidly applied this method to disarmament lately. No progress has yet been made at these talks, as at the talks on chemical weapons, at a number of other talks which have been initiated, and no progress on

the talks which should have been initiated. The reason is that our partners do not want to conduct talks.

We reproach the Western countries on the matter of ending nuclear weapons tests, and particularly the United States Administration, which refuses to reach agreement on this question or even to conduct talks. Strange as it might seem, even the Madrid forum has not yet ended. But, given even a slightly objective approach, it should have ended long ago because the basic political framework for it was defined by the Helsinki Final Act. Those specific questions which are arising and have arisen should be tackled within the framework of this basic document and, given goodwill, they should be resolved. It is to be hoped that this forum will eventually end with positive results. We would like to believe this.

In conclusion, Mr. Gromyko thanked the journalists and expressed the hope that the press conference would be covered by them objectively.
