

OPS subject on
Defence, INF. Pt 3

Translation from Russian
(Unofficial)

Dear Mrs. Prime Minister,

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No 122A/83

I considered it necessary to draw your attention again to the question which took now a special place in the East-West relations. I mean the problem of limiting nuclear arms in Europe.

I think you will agree with me that the forthcoming round of the Soviet-American talks in Geneva acquires decisive significance. If in the next few months an agreement is not reached and the deployment in Western Europe of new American missiles begins then the present talks will become meaningless. The world will find itself dragged into another round of the arms race with all consequent repercussions. As we have repeatedly stated in response to the US attempt to upset the global and regional balance of forces in its favour, the USSR and its allies will be compelled to take the necessary counter-measures.

In other words, if the USA goes along the above-mentioned way, it will inevitably lead to a sharp rise of the level of nuclear confrontation and, accordingly, to an increased risk of a nuclear conflict. At the same time co-operation between states in different fields will suffer. Nobody will gain anything from this course of events, but everybody will lose.

Striving to prevent it, the Soviet Union made another major step designed to facilitate the agreement. We declared our readiness to liquidate in the European part of the USSR those of our medium-range missiles, which would be subject to reductions. Their number would include also a considerable part of the "SS-20" missiles, particularly, the part which would be in excess of the aggregate number of the British and French medium-range missiles.

Naturally, this can be implemented only if a mutually acceptable agreement is reached on the whole problem of limiting medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe, including the US refusal to deploy new American missiles there.

Thus, none of the medium-range missiles which would be subject to reductions in the European part of the USSR would be relocated to the Asian part of our country. Therefore, allegations that we are going to create in the East, from the missiles relocated there, a certain "reserve" for their repeated deployment in Europe, would in this case be devoid of any sense whatsoever. If your Government also had any, though unjustified, doubts on that score, now there shall be no more ground for that.

I hope that you, Mrs. Prime Minister, will fully appreciate the significance of the step, which the Soviet Union is making. It was not at all easy for us to take this decision. And we have the right to expect that the other side will at last make real steps towards the working out in Geneva of an honest and mutually-acceptable agreement.

Britain does not take part in the Geneva talks. But owing to the actual state of affairs, it also lies with Britain whether there is an agreement there or not. Indeed, the American side cites as one of the main pretexts for avoiding an agreement, the refusal of Britain and France to agree with the Soviet position.

However, the solution, proposed at the talks by the Soviet Union, in the part related to corresponding British nuclear forces, i.e. taking them into account as a real quantity, without any consequent obligations for Britain itself, can, in our profound conviction, inflict no damage whatsoever to its interests. And for us the question of the British, as well as the French nuclear weapons, is not at all an abstract one. We cannot but take them into account in the sense of maintaining the balance of nuclear forces. Hence, if the USA wrecks the agreement in Geneva by starting the deployment of its missiles in Europe, and the USSR, accordingly, is compelled to implement counter-measures, then inevitable in this case raising of the level of nuclear confrontation in Europe will hardly meet the interests of Britain as well.

We are aware of statements of the British side about its interest in reaching the agreement between the USSR and the USA in Geneva. Before new American missiles appeared in the territory

of Britain and other European countries such an agreement is possible. It is important not to miss such an opportunity. Britain, which is directly affected by the problem of the limitation of nuclear arms in Europe, can play its part in this important matter. We would like to expect that that will be the case.

With respect

(Signed)

Y. ANDROPOV

August 27, 1983