

T119/79T

Dear Mrs. Prime Minister,

I am sending You this letter in order to draw your attention to the questions of military detente and limitation of armaments in Europe.

I would like to summarise briefly the substance of our ideas and proposals on these questions laid down in my speech in Berlin on 6 October a.c.

1. The allegations that are disseminated in the West to the effect that the Soviet Union is building up its military strength on the European continent over and above its defence requirements have nothing in common with reality. They could not be regarded otherwise than an intention to cover up the development, adoption and carrying out the plans to deploy the new types of American nuclear missile weapons in Western Europe. In other words they have an end to break the balance of forces existing in Europe, to try to give military superiority to NATO.

One can say in advance that these attempts would hardly be successful. The Soviet Union and its allies would have to make the necessary additional steps to strengthen their security. No other option would be left for them.

It is quite clear however that the fulfilment of the mentioned plans by the NATO countries would inevitably lead to the aggravation of the situation in Europe and would to a great extent contaminate the international atmosphere as a whole.

I would like to express the hope, Mrs. Prime Minister, that your Government and You personally will consider over and over again all the aspects of this problem, will assess thoroughly the consequences hidden in the deployment on the territory of your country of new types of American nuclear missile weapons aimed at the USSR and its allies.

As for the Soviet Union, I have already repeatedly said and would like to say it again to You personally: we do not seek military superiority; we have never threatened and do not intend to threaten anybody. Our strategic doctrine is purely defensive in nature.

I also confirm again that the Soviet Union will never use nuclear arms against those states that renounce the production and acquisition of such arms and do not have them on their territory.

2. As I have most definitely stated in Berlin, the number of medium-range carriers of nuclear arms on the territory of the European part of the Soviet Union has not been increased by a single missile, by a single plane during the past ten years. On the contrary the number of launchers of medium-range missiles and also the yield of the nuclear charges of these missiles have even been somewhat reduced. The number of medium-range bombers, too, has diminished. As for the territory of other states the Soviet Union does not deploy such means there at all. Already for a number of years now we have not been increasing the number of our armed forces stationed in Central Europe either. Those are indisputable facts, Mrs. Prime Minister, and I am sure that they are well known to the appropriate bodies in your country.

Moreover, we are prepared to reduce the number of medium-range nuclear weapons deployed in western areas of the Soviet Union as compared with the present level but, of course, only in the event of no additional medium-range nuclear weapons being deployed in Western Europe.

As is known, important talks on SALT-3 are impending. We are in favour of starting them immediately after the entry into force of the SALT-2 Treaty. Within the framework of these talks we agree to discuss the possibilities of limiting not only inter-continental but also other types of armaments, naturally, with due regard to all relevant factors and with strict observance of the principles of the equal security of the parties.

3. The Soviet Union motivated by a sincere desire to extricate from a blind alley the efforts made over many years to achieve military détente in Europe, to set an example of the transition from words to actual deeds, have decided, in agreement

with the leadership of the GDR and after consultations with other member-states of the Warsaw Treaty, unilaterally to reduce the number of Soviet troops in Central Europe. Up to 20,000 Soviet servicemen, a thousand tanks and also a certain amount of other military hardware will be withdrawn from the territory of the German Democratic Republic in the course of the next twelve months.

We hope that this new concrete manifestation of the peaceableness and good will of the Soviet Union and its allies will be duly assessed by the governments of countries-members of NATO and that they will follow our example.

4. Being in favour of a further strengthening of trust among states we are prepared in particular to reach agreement that prior notifications about big exercises of ground forces envisaged by the Helsinki Final Act, be made not three weeks but one month in advance and not from the level of 25,000 men as it is the case now but, say, from the level of 20,000 men. We are also prepared, on the basis of reciprocity, not to conduct military exercises involving more than 40,000-50,000 men. Besides that, we propose to notify timely not only about military exercises but also about movements of ground forces numbering more than 20,000 men in the area defined by the Helsinki Final Act.

I think, Mrs. Prime Minister, that the essence of the new initiatives, taken by the Soviet Union in consultation with other member-states of the Warsaw Treaty, speaks for itself. I would emphasize only one point - all of them are motivated by our desire to strengthen peace and security in Europe by supplementing political detente with measures of military detente, including the measures of concrete reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe.

Naturally, all the proposals made earlier by member-states of the Warsaw Treaty, remain in force, including those concerning the conclusion among all participants of the All-European conference of a treaty on the non-first use of both nuclear and conventional arms; the non-expansion of military political groupings in Europe; the notifications about major air force exercises and naval exercises staged near the territorial waters

of other states-participants in the All-European conference; the extension of the confidence - building measures to the region of the Mediterranean.

On our part we shall be prepared to consider other proposals aimed at strengthening trust among states and lessening the danger of war in Europe.

These are the considerations about military detente and arms limitation in Europe, which I and my colleagues wanted to bring to your attention, Mrs. Prime Minister. I shall be glad to receive, if possible, an early reply from You on the matters raised by me.

Yours sincerely,

L. Brezhnev

14 October 1979

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.
Prime Minister of Great Britain