

In a few days the Soviet-American talks on nuclear and space arms will resume in Geneva. When we met with President Reagan last November in Geneva, we had a frank discussion on the whole range of problems that constitute the subject of those negotiations, namely on space, strategic offensive and intermediate-range nuclear systems. It was agreed that the negotiations should be accelerated: that agreement must not remain a mere declaration.

The Soviet delegation in Geneva will be instructed to act in strict compliance with that agreement. We expect the same constructive approach from the United States side, above all on the question of space. Space must remain peaceful, strike weapons should not be deployed there. Neither should they be developed. And there should also be the most rigorous control, including opening up the relevant laboratories for inspection.

Mankind is at a crucial stage of the new space age. And it is time to abandon the thinking of the stone age, when the chief concern was to have a bigger stick or a heavier stone. We are against weapons in space. Our material and intellectual capabilities make it possible for the Soviet Union to develop any weapon if we are compelled to do so. But we are fully aware of our responsibility to the present and future generations. It is our profound conviction that we should enter the third millennium not with the "star wars" programme but with large-scale projects for the peaceful exploration of space by all mankind. We propose starting practical work on such projects and their implementation. This is one of the major ways of ensuring progress throughout our planet and establishing a reliable system of security for all.

To prevent the arms race from extending into space is to remove the obstacle to deep cuts in nuclear weapons. There is on the negotiating table in Geneva a Soviet proposal for halving the relevant nuclear arms of the Soviet Union and the United States, which would be an important step towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. To reject the possibility of resolving the problem of space means that one does not wish to stop the arms race on Earth. This should be stated in clear and straightforward terms. It is not by chance that the proponents of the nuclear-arms race are also ardent supporters of the "star wars" programme. These are two sides of the same policy, which is hostile to the interests of people.