

REPLIES OF MR. KONSTANTIN U. CHERNENKO TO
QUESTIONS OF THE WASHINGTON POST

The Washington Post's Moscow Bureau Chief, Mr. D. Doder, asked Mr. Konstantin U. Chernenko to answer some questions dealing with Soviet-United States relations, a subject which he described as being of concern not only to readers of The Washington Post but to millions of people throughout the world.

Mr. Chernenko's answers are given below.

Question: President Reagan has said that the United States is prepared to resume a dialogue with the Soviet Union on a broad range of questions including arms control. What is the attitude of the Soviet Union towards President Reagan's expression of readiness for talks?

Answer: We have already heard references to the United States Administration's readiness for talks in the past, but they have never been supported by real deeds which would attest to a genuine desire to reach agreement on a just and mutually acceptable basis on even a single one of the essential issues of our relations, particularly in the field of arms limitation and a reduction of the danger of war.

Every time we have put forward concrete proposals, they have run into a blank wall. Let me give some examples.

This is what happened last March when we identified a whole set of problems. Reaching agreement on them - or at least on some of them - would mean a real shift both in Soviet-United States relations and in the international situation as a whole. But they simply avoided responding to our proposals.

This was also the case in June, when we proposed reaching agreement on preventing the militarization of outer space. This time we were answered, but with what? An attempt was made to change the very topic of the negotiations; it was proposed to discuss issues relating to nuclear weapons, i.e. issues which had previously been discussed at the talks in Geneva which were wrecked by the United States itself. At the same time, the United States not only refused to remove the obstacles created by the deployment of new United States missiles in Western Europe, but is going ahead with their deployment.

And what about outer space? Instead of preventing an arms race in space, we were invited to set about working out some rules for such a race, and in fact to legalize it. Obviously, we cannot agree to that. Our objective is genuinely peaceful outer space and we shall persistently strive to attain that goal.

These are the facts.