

zone in Northern Europe,” to “form the basis of future political assessments and actions.”²⁶ The first session of the working group was held in late May.²⁷

In the meantime, the Soviets had taken a new initiative designed to encourage progress on the zone. Ever since President Brezhnev's stated willingness in 1981 to consider measures affecting Soviet territory, there had been hints that such measures could include a “thinning-out” of intermediate-range nuclear missiles on the Kola Peninsula and other areas of the Soviet Union adjacent to the proposed zone, as called for by the Swedes.²⁸ In the fall of 1986, the Soviets not only revealed specifically what they had in mind, but went so far as to announce that they had *already put into effect* several measures of the type envisaged. During a visit to Helsinki on 13 November 1986, CPSU Central Committee Secretary Yegor Ligachev announced that the USSR had “already dismantled the launchers for medium-range missiles in the Kola Peninsula and the larger part of the launchers for such missiles in the rest of the territory of the Leningrad and Baltic Military Districts and moved several battalions of operational-tactical missiles out of those districts for redeployment elsewhere.” The sole remaining “bargaining chip” presented by Ligachev was a reiteration of the long-standing offer to withdraw ballistic-missile submarines from the Soviet Baltic Fleet, “in the framework of implementing the proposal for a nuclear-free north, . . . if the corresponding countries reach agreement on this issue.” There was no indication of whether the Soviets would be prepared to consider additional measures on their own territory (for example, the withdrawal or dismantling of shorter-range tactical nuclear weapons in the area), but it was made clear that “we expect reciprocity” for the measures already taken.²⁹

26. As reported by Sergey Astakhov, in: “For a Nuclear-Free North,” Moscow *Selskaya Zhizn*, 1 April 1987, p. 3, in: *FBIS Worldwide Report — Arms Control*, JPRS-TAC-87-029, 24 April 1987, p. 116.

27. Yuriy Kuznetsov, “Does the North Need AWACS Aircraft?” Moscow *Pravda*, 28 May 1987, p. 5, in: *FBIS — Soviet Union (SU)*, 5 June 1987, p. H7.

28. See, e.g., *ACR*, June 1983, pp. 404.B.20-21; and *ACR*, January 1985, p. 404.B.30.

29. Moscow TASS in English, 1836 GMT 13 November 1986, in: *FBIS — SU*, 14 November 1986, p. G9.