

Today, I wish to announce, on behalf of the Soviet leadership, that our decision was the following:

The Soviet Union suggests that the problem of medium-range missiles in Europe should be singled out from the package of issues, that a separate agreement should be concluded on it and that that should be done without delay. For such a step, there is not merely a basis, but an agreement that is actually ready. In Reykjavik, it was agreed that the USSR and the United States would eliminate all their medium-range missiles in Europe over the next five years. During that period, the number of Soviet missiles of this class in the Asian part of our territory would be reduced to 100 warheads, on the understanding that the United States could leave the same number of medium-range-missile warheads in its national territory.

As soon as an agreement on the elimination of Soviet and American medium-range missiles in Europe has been signed, the USSR will withdraw from the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia, by agreement with the Governments of those countries, the extended-range theatre missiles that were deployed there in response to the deployment of Pershing-II and cruise missiles in western Europe. As far as other theatre missiles are concerned, we are willing to begin talks immediately with a view to their reduction and complete elimination.

Thus, there is a real possibility of freeing our common European home from a substantial proportion of the nuclear burden within a very short period of time. That would be a real and major step towards the complete liberation of Europe from nuclear arms. We are putting our proposals on the table of the negotiations with the United States in Geneva.

We have been assured more than once that, if the USSR singles out the question of medium-range missiles from the Reykjavik package, there will be no difficulty in agreeing to their elimination from Europe. Now there is a good opportunity of proving that in practice. That is awaited by the Europeans and the peoples of other continents, that is required by the interests of the present and of the future.

In singling out now the problem of medium-range missiles in Europe, the Soviet Government continues to consider it extremely important to reach agreement on the substantial limitation and then the elimination of strategic arms. Of course, the conclusion of such an agreement, as has repeatedly been emphasized, is bound to be subject to a decision on the inadmissibility of the deployment of weapons in outer space, in view of the organic interconnection between these questions.

The Soviet Union is again demonstrating its will - notwithstanding all the difficulties and artificial obstructions - to resolve the problem of nuclear disarmament. The new way of thinking means an ability to heed the voice of public opinion, in Europe and the world, to comprehend the concerns and interests of other peoples and not to divorce one's own security from that of neighbours in our interconnected world.

The historic chance must not be missed! We await a speedy and positive reply.