Answers of Mr. K.U. Chernenko to the questions of Mr. S. Louri, correspondent of the American television company, CNN

Question: Do you think that the agreement reached between the United States and the USSR in Geneva on the negotiations which are to begin on 12 March create the conditions for serious and fruitful consideration of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the halting of the arms race on Earth?

Answer: We have no doubt about this. Objectively, the agreement on the subject and goals of the forthcoming Soviet-United States negotiations do open up such a possibility. It offers a sound basis, and I would say the only one possible in the present circumstances, for solving the problems of nuclear and space weapons. It is today impossible to limit nuclear weapons, still less to reduce them, without taking effective measures to prevent the militarization of outer space. This inherent link is clearly established in the joint Soviet-American document.

Another fundamental point is that in this document it is clearly stated that the end result of the parties' efforts in the field of arms limitation and reduction should be the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. I would like to remind you that the Soviet Union has consistently advocated this very solution ever since nuclear weapons first appeared. I would point out that so far the United States has not wanted even to discuss this point.

I repeat, the basis exists for serious, purposeful negotiations. The main thing is to follow the agreement reached in Geneva in good faith and to stick to it strictly in all respects in practice.

We shall give our delegation clear instructions to act in this manner, and we expect the United States to do the same.

Question: Why is the Soviet Union so firmly opposed to the United States "strategic defence initiative" concept, bearing in mind that today the United States Government is referring only to scientific research in this field?

Answer: The use of the word "defence" is a play on words. Essentially, this concept is offensive, and in fact aggressive. Its goal is to attempt to disarm the other side, to deprive it of the possibility of making a counter-strike in the event of a nuclear attack against it.

To put it more simply, the aim is to gain the possibility of making a nuclear strike with impunity by protecting oneself against retribution by means of an anti-missile "shield". This is the same old policy of achieving decisive military superiority, with all its consequences for peace and international security.

I think it is clear from this why we are firmly opposed to this concept and these plans.

References to the fact that for the time being plans are limited to scientific research are only misleading. I would remind you that the atom bomb was the result of scientific research under the Manhattan Project. Everyone knows how this turned out for the residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Since then, the whole world, including the Americans themselves, is living in the shadow of nuclear weapons. We cannot now allow a serious danger to come from space.