

RESPONSE BY M.S.GORBACHEV, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPSU, TO THE JOINT STATEMENT  
BY THE LEADERS OF ARGENTINA, GREECE, INDIA, MEXICO,  
SWEDEN AND TANZANIA

I have studied the joint statement of 22 May 1987 by the leaders of six States with great interest. I fully share the impassioned appeal that rings out in it to begin, at last, the process of nuclear disarmament, and thereby to lay the foundation for a more secure world in order to spare future generations the nightmare of a nuclear catastrophe.

There is no doubt that, given political will, it is possible to attain far-reaching agreements in the sphere of nuclear disarmament. The Soviet Union has, by its practical actions and large-scale initiatives, convincingly demonstrated that it has that will. The most concrete and eloquent evidence of this is, perhaps, to be found in the approach by the USSR to the problem of medium-range missiles.

One might have thought that our recent proposals on this score, as well as on shorter-range missiles, in which maximum account is taken of the wishes and interests of the United States and its West European allies, had removed all the obstacles and taken the negotiations on medium-range missiles into the finishing straight. However, the nervousness with which some people in the West have reacted to the genuine prospect of the achievement of agreement on medium-range missiles has engendered serious doubts about the sincerity of the earlier assertions by a number of West European governments of interest in the complete elimination of Soviet and American medium-range missiles within the European area.

Nevertheless, we have not lost hope that common sense will prevail and that the prospect to which I have referred will become a reality. That would mean the accomplishment, for the first time since nuclear arms appeared on the scene, of an extremely important step on the difficult but, for humanity, the only sensible road towards the full, the universal elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Soviet Union will spare no efforts rapidly to secure the elaboration and signature of a mutually acceptable Soviet-American agreement on medium-range missiles on the basis of the agreement in principle that was reached at Reykjavik. That is precisely the task that has been set for the USSR delegation at the Geneva talks on nuclear and space weapons. The matter now depends on our partners, from whom we await reciprocal movement.

I have more than once had occasion to set out the Soviet Union's position concerning the total inadmissibility of the extension of the arms race to outer space and our assessment of America's "Strategic Defence Initiative" programme and the extreme danger it represents for peace. The truth here is unequivocal: the deployment of weapons in outer space would lead inevitably to the growth of mutual distrust, would whip up the arms race and would make peace still more vulnerable.

We firmly reject the "Star Wars" plans and have put forward in opposition to them a set of initiatives aimed at instituting extensive co-operation in the peaceful exploration and conquest of outer space in the interests of all humanity.