

No. 15

**Letter by the Chairman of the SPD, Brandt, to the General  
Secretary of the CC of the CPSU, Andropov  
22 September 1983<sup>1</sup>**

*AdsD, WBA, A 9, 9.*

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*English translation: Dwight E. Langston*

Dear Mr. General Secretary,

First of all, I would like to thank you for your letter.<sup>2</sup> I am very appreciative of the spirit in which you wrote it.

Allow me to reply with the openness which the situation requires, in which we share some common interests with respect to a worsening of the international situation and partly have parallel interests as they are consequences of our differing positions.

I recognise your efforts in this direction and can imagine that flexibility is not always easy for a world power; I understand that you reach your limitations when the security interests of your country are at stake. What I would like to communicate to you will absolutely take these limitations into consideration.

I am thinking of a situation which, due to factors discernable today, could become a reality by the second half of November [1983]: No results in Geneva, still no American missiles on the soil of any Western European countries, but still about 250 SS 20 systems capable of reaching Western Europe.<sup>3</sup> For my country, that would be a situation which the SPD could certainly not justify in the long term, because, as you know, we have a goal of seeing the SS 20s reduced to such an extent that stationing American missiles becomes unnecessary. This position also takes into consideration that appropriate allowances must be made for the existing British and French systems.<sup>4</sup>

You yourself have expressed a readiness to considerably reduce your SS 20 systems to a level which is sufficient to achieve a

counterbalance to British and French nuclear weapons systems.<sup>5</sup> My proposal is: Begin doing that! Begin doing that in a way that makes it clear to the public in Western Europe and America, while new missiles are not yet stationed here, how much the Soviet Union is serious about preventing a new round of rearmament and achieving results in Geneva. Nothing could lend better prospects of success to efforts toward obviating new American missiles than such a dramatic unilateral step by the Soviet Union, a step which can also be unilaterally reversed if American missiles are stationed after all. It would extricate many from a situation - including, by the way, the peace movements here and in America - which might [sic] create the impression that they are defending the retention of present capabilities while they are militating against the stationing of new American missiles.

As much as I appreciate the Soviet Union's proposals and perceive in them its readiness for constructive negotiations, I have the impression that, in the decisive weeks which lie before us, we will no longer be well served by proposals which are protracted on various pretexts or responded to with remarks to the effect that negotiations on them necessarily take a long time; on the contrary, only concrete, verifiable actions, even alarming ones in a positive sense, can lead to the outcome which we both wish for.

This is a contribution which no entity other than the Soviet Union can make. I know how difficult it will be, but it would completely safeguard your country's security interests.

As to what interests the Social Democratic parties, I would like to direct your attention to the meetings concerning the Geneva negotiations which those parties from small NATO countries have held for more than two years and which representatives of the SPD and the Labour Party - French socialists less frequently - regularly attend as observers.<sup>6</sup> Although the individual parties take differing positions on the subject of stationing missiles, I have reason to assume that they are going to go public sometime next month with a unified recommendation to give negotiations in Geneva more time.

I welcome your readiness and reciprocate to it to intensify consultations on these issues at those levels which are most likely to be fruitful.<sup>7</sup>

We make full use of our limited abilities to influence the American government. That a situation has developed where we ascribe greater importance to the responsibility and the conduct of the Soviet Union, is surely something which could not be, were it not for the positive relations which have developed between us on the basis of the Moscow Treaty.<sup>8</sup>

Yours respectfully,

<signed Willy Brandt><sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Template copy is a carbon copy of the letter. Copies also went to Helmut Schmidt, Johannes Rau, Hans-Jochen Vogel, Hans-Jürgen Wischniewski, Egon Bahr, Horst Ehmke, Peter Glotz, Pentti Väänänen and Kalevi Sorsa.

<sup>2</sup> On 10 September 1983, the Soviet Ambassador Semënov had delivered to the SPD chairman a letter by Andropov as well as a letter from the CC of the CPSU. See AdsD, WBA, A 9, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Brandt is referring here only to the SS 20s stationed in the European part of the Soviet Union. According to Federal Defence Ministry information in July 1983, at this time the USSR had a total of 351 SS 20's as well as 248 of the older SS 4 and SS 5 missiles. Cf. AdG 53 (1983), p. 27024.

<sup>4</sup> On the problem of including French and British nuclear weapons, cf. Introduction as well as No. 6, Notes 8 and 9.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 7, Note 20.

<sup>6</sup> Meant here are the informal meetings by member parties of the Socialist International from Norway, Denmark and the Benelux countries which had been taking place since 1981 under the name Scandilux. Usually, Egon Bahr took part in the discussions as an observer for the SPD. The participants were united in a critical stance toward American security and defence policies. The Southern European member parties of the SI took a rather dismissive stance toward the positions adopted by Scandilux. Cf. *Devin, Guillaume: L'Internationale Socialiste*, Paris 1993, p. 230.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Note 2. In his reply of 30 November 1983, the Soviet General Secretary affirmed the "unmodified readiness for consultations and an exchange of opinions" both with the SPD and the Socialist International and welcomed the Social Democrats' no to the stationing of American missiles. See AdsD, Dep. Bahr 1/EBAA000961.

<sup>8</sup> Meant here is the German-Soviet Treaty of 12 August 1970.

<sup>9</sup> Signature by rubber stamp.