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Item 57 of the preliminary list*

**IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 40/88 ON THE IMMEDIATE
CESSATION AND PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR-WEAPON TESTS**

Letter dated 17 March 1986 from the Acting Permanent Representative
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour hereby to transmit to you the text of the reply by
M. S. Gorbachev, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist
Party of the Soviet Union, to the joint message from the leaders of Argentina,
Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania (A/41/210-S/17910
and Corr.1).

I request you to have the text of this reply circulated as an official
document of the General Assembly under item 57 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) V. SAFRONCHUK
Acting Permanent Representative
of the USSR to the
United Nations

* A/41/50/Rev.1.

Reply dated 13 March 1986 by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to the joint message from the leaders of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania

It grieves me profoundly to note that Olaf Palme, felled by the villainous hand of a low assassin, is no longer among you. His tragic death has brought great pain into the hearts of all those who cherish peace, which he had campaigned passionately and tirelessly to preserve.

On behalf of the Soviet leadership, I wish to express to you our profound respect for the consistency and purposefulness that characterize your efforts aimed at terminating the arms race and preventing nuclear war. In our view, your promotion of joint initiatives responds fully to the task of developing constructive and positive interaction between States and peoples on a global scale, especially today when the very fate of the human race hangs in the balance.

The thoughts expressed in your letter concerning universal security without nuclear weapons are entirely consonant with the idea of establishing a comprehensive system of international security which we put forward at the recent 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. One of the fundamental principles of such a system must be the complete and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons) and we are in agreement with you on this matter.

We also, I think, concur in the view that the cessation of nuclear tests can and must be an important step towards freeing mankind from the nuclear-arms race and all its pernicious consequences.

Clearly, it is no accident that you should raise this question again at this very moment, not long before the expiry of the unilateral Soviet moratorium on nuclear explosions. The additional time which we gave the United States Administration to weigh our proposals is running out. We cannot extend it on a unilateral basis indefinitely. By having conducted no nuclear explosions - either test explosions or peaceful ones - for over seven months now, we have already paid a certain price both in military and in economic terms.

At the same time, in response to your appeal to the USSR and the United States not to conduct any nuclear tests before the next Soviet-American summit meeting, we declare :

The Soviet Union will not conduct nuclear explosions even after 31 March - until the first nuclear explosion by the United States.

Concerning the problem of verification, I should like again to emphasize that we attach great importance to this matter since we are interested in ensuring that accords are strictly observed and that all parties are fully confident of that fact,

With respect to a nuclear-test ban, verification can be provided by national technical facilities, as well as through international procedures - including on-site inspection where necessary. We invite the American side to reach agreement on providing the opportunity for observers from both sides, on a reciprocal basis

and upon request, to visit sites where unclear phenomena occur in order to remove possible doubts as to whether such phenomena are related to nuclear explosions.

We are willing to take up your proposal - if, of course, it is also accepted by the other side - for providing assistance in verifying the cessation of nuclear tests, including on-site inspection.

A treaty banning nuclear-weapon tests on the basis of international law is, of course, essential in order to resolve fully the problem of testing. We suggest that work should be started without delay to draw up such a treaty and that appropriate talks in any form - bilateral, tripartite or multilateral - should be resumed or started, but without linkage to any other questions. However, to those who fear that questions of verification may be pushed into the background during the talks, we propose that from the very outset such talks should simultaneously deal with those questions, too, in order to have a comprehensive accord as early as possible,

I can assure you that the Soviet Union, for its part, will continue to do everything necessary to bring about a practical solution to the urgent problem of ending nuclear tests and to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear arsenals.

M. GORBACHEV