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Items 49 and 57 of the preliminary list*

CESSATION OF ALL NUCLEAR-TEST EXPLOSIONS

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

Letter dated 11 April 1986 from the Permanent Representative of
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of a statement issued by the Soviet Government on 11 April 1986.

I request you, Sir, to circulate this text as an official document of the General Assembly under items 49 and 57 of the preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Y. V. DUBININ

* A/41/50/Rev.1.

4p.

Annex

STATEMENT BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

The nuclear explosion conducted on 10 April 1986 by the United States clearly showed once again that the United States Administration's words about its devotion to the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons serve in reality to conceal its intention to continue threatening mankind with the nuclear sword and to keep the world trapped by the fear of universal annihilation. Washington is again putting the egotistical and imperialistic ambitions of the United States military-industrial complex above the interests of mankind. The irresponsible actions of the United States Government constitute an open challenge not only to the Soviet Union but also to the peoples of every continent and to the world as a whole.

In direct contrast to the course pursued by the United States Administration, the Soviet Union has proposed an alternative to nuclear madness in its endeavour to help end the build-up of nuclear arsenals. Last summer the USSR announced that it was stopping all nuclear explosions from 6 August to 31 December 1985. The Soviet Government urgently appealed to the United States Administration to join that initiative and thereby make the moratorium a mutual one. That would make possible a radical slow-down in the nuclear arms race, the termination of the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and of the creation of new types of weapons, and a start on the road of practical action leading to the elimination of nuclear arms.

After the Geneva meeting between M. S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and President Ronald Reagan of the United States, the Soviet Government, despite the continuation of nuclear tests in the United States, took yet another constructive step by extending its moratorium until 31 March 1986. Finally, in response to an appeal from the leaders of six countries - Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania - to the USSR and the United States not to conduct any nuclear tests during the period before the next Soviet-United States summit meeting, the Soviet side again showed its good will by declaring that it was ready to abstain from nuclear explosions even after 31 March, until the first time the United States conducted such an explosion.

Such one-sided moderation at a time when the United States was continuing to modernize its nuclear missile arsenal and engage in major military programmes, including work on the so-called "strategic defense initiative", clearly demonstrated the Soviet Union's desire to try every possibility to influence the other side's position by the force of its example. If the United States Administration had responded to the Soviet initiative and taken the step expected of it by the peoples of the world, the possibility of halting nuclear tests on earth would have become a completely realistic one.

It is therefore easy to understand the profound disappointment and universal indignation in the world at the new underground nuclear-weapon test conducted by the United States side despite the protests and wishes of the world's peoples and contrary to the voice of reason.

The Soviet Union has repeatedly given the United States Administration an opportunity to back up with practical actions its declarations that it was striving for a nuclear-free world and to take a responsible decision by joining the Soviet moratorium on nuclear explosions. At the same time, the Soviet leadership warned - and this warning was also emphasized in M. S. Gorbachev's statement of 29 March on Soviet television - that if the United States continued its nuclear tests after 31 March, the Soviet Union would be compelled to renew its own nuclear tests.

Since in spite of these warnings, a new nuclear test has been carried out in the United States, the USSR Government declares that as from now it is released from its unilateral commitment to refrain from conducting any nuclear explosions. If Washington continues its nuclear explosions, the Soviet State cannot fail to safeguard its own security and that of its allies.

Nevertheless, believing as before that the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests would be a genuine practical step leading to the elimination of nuclear armaments, the Soviet Union expresses its readiness to return at any time to the subject of a mutual moratorium on nuclear explosions if the Government of the United States declares that it will refrain from conducting such explosions. Thus, the decision concerning the cessation of nuclear tests depends, as before, on the United States, on whether the United States Administration will show a sense of realism and responsibility.

At the same time, the Soviet Government again reaffirms its proposal to initiate at once discussions on the total cessation of nuclear weapon tests. The USSR is ready for talks in any form and for any type of agreement on the subject, so long as progress is made towards reaching an agreement.

The Soviet Government reaffirms its proposal to the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom to renew and bring to a conclusion the trilateral negotiations aimed at a general and complete cessation of nuclear-weapon testing, which were broken off in 1980. The Soviet Union favours an immediate start of multilateral negotiations within the framework of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament for the same purpose. We are also ready to reach agreement on extending the validity of the 1963 Moscow Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water to the underground testing of nuclear weapons, which was called for by the United Nations General Assembly at its fortieth session.

In order to reach agreement on the cessation of nuclear tests, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has proposed to the President of the United States that they should hold a meeting in the near future at one of the European capitals. That offer remains open.

With regard to the questions concerning verification of the observance of an agreement on the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests, there are no insurmountable difficulties, as is shown by the experience of many years of international consideration of these questions. The Soviet Union, for its part, attaches extremely great importance to making provision for reliable measures to verify compliance with an agreement banning nuclear tests; it is in favour of the most rigorous control, including on-site inspection. All that is needed is the taking of a political decision to terminate the tests.

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It is the profound conviction of the Soviet Government that the problem of banning nuclear-weapon tests is one of the most urgent problems of today, and the Soviet Union will continue to strive steadfastly for its solution in the interests of ensuring international security and a stable peace without nuclear weapons.
