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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Forty-second session

Items 50, 51, 57, 58, 63, 67 and 74 of
the preliminary list*

CESSATION OF ALL NUCLEAR-TEST EXPLOSIONS

URGENT NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE

NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY

PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

RESOLUTION 41/54 ON THE IMMEDIATE

CESSATION AND PROHIBITION OF

NUCLEAR-WEAPON TESTS ,

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED

BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH

SPECIAL SESSION

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL

PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL

Forty-second year

Letter dated 12 June 1987 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 enclose the text of the reply by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, M. S. Gorbachev, to the joint statement by the leaders of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania (see annex). I request you to circulate the text as a document of the General Assembly, under items 50, 51, 57, 58, 63, 67 and 74 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) A. BELONOGOV

* A/42/50.

ANNEX

Reply by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the
Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the joint statement of
22 May 1987 by the leaders of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico,
Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania

I have read with great interest the joint statement by the leaders of the six States dated 22 May 1987 (see A/42/319-S/18894). I fully endorse the passionate appeal it contains that the process of nuclear disarmament should at last be begun, thereby laying the foundations for a more secure world, so as to save succeeding generations from the nightmare of a nuclear catastrophe.

There can be no doubt that, if the political will exists, far-reaching agreements in the nuclear disarmament field can be arrived at. The Soviet Union has convincingly demonstrated by its practical actions and wide-ranging initiatives that such will exists on its part. And perhaps the most concrete and eloquent manifestation of this is in the Soviet Union's approach to the problem of intermediate-range missiles.

With our recent proposals in this respect, as well as in respect of tactical missiles, which took full account of the desires and interests of the United States of America and its Western European allies, it appeared that all the obstacles had been removed and the talks on intermediate-range missiles had entered the finishing straight. However, the nervous reaction of some people in the West to the genuine prospects which had emerged for the attainment of agreement on intermediate-range missiles gave rise to serious doubts regarding the sincerity of the earlier assertions by certain Western European Governments of their interest in the complete elimination of Soviet and American intermediate-range missiles in the European theatre.

We have nevertheless not lost hope that common sense will prevail and that these prospects will become a reality. This would mean that, for the first time since the appearance of nuclear weapons, an exceptionally important step had been taken on the difficult but, for mankind, the only reasonable path to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Soviet Union is sparing no effort to ensure that a mutually acceptable Soviet-American agreement on intermediate-range missiles, based on the understanding in principle reached at Reykjavik, is worked out and signed within a short space of time. This was precisely the assignment given to the Soviet delegation to the Geneva talks on nuclear and space weapons. The ball is now in our partners' court, and we await their response.

I have more than once been called upon to set out the Soviet Union's position with respect to the absolute impermissibility of the arms race being extended into outer space, and our assessment of the extremely dangerous nature of the United States "strategic defense initiative" programme for the cause of peace. The truth here is unambiguous: the deployment of weapons in outer space would inevitably lead to an increase in mutual distrust, give new impetus to the arms race and make peace even more vulnerable.

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We decisively reject the "star wars" plans, and have put forward to counter them a set of initiatives aimed at instituting broad co-operation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space in the interests of the whole of mankind.

The Soviet Union is seeking to convince the United States of the need for the anti-ballistic missile treaty régime, which constitutes the fundamental basis for agreements on substantial reductions in strategic offensive weapons, to be strengthened in every possible way. It must be perfectly apparent that unless this treaty is maintained to the fullest extent, such reductions would be impossible.

To avoid agreement on strategic offensive weapons being undermined by the spread of armaments to outer space, we consider that the Soviet Union and the United States should assume an obligation not to depart from the treaty for 10 years, and at the same time agree on a list of space-based devices whose deployment in outer space, even for purposes of testing, would be prohibited during that period.

I think the world community is also well aware of our position of principle with regard to nuclear tests. I repeat what I have said before: the Soviet Union's termination of the unilateral moratorium which had lasted for more than a year and a half was a decision we were forced, compelled to take.

We invite the United States yet again to begin full-scale talks on the complete cessation of nuclear tests under strict international supervision, including on-site inspection. As first steps towards this major objective, the talks could review the issues of ratification of the Soviet-United States treaties of 1974 and 1976 and a substantial reduction in the threshold capacity of nuclear explosions permitted under these treaties, with a simultaneous reduction in their number. With a view to promoting the earliest possible ratification of these treaties, the Soviet Union is ready to agree with the United States on the conduct of the relevant calibration experiments at each other's test sites. We advocate that these experiments should be conducted using both the national seismographic equipment of the two countries and the seismic monitoring facilities of the Six-Nation group, subject of course to the latter's consent. We are also ready for immediate practical measures in relation to these talks, for example, the reaching of interim agreement with the United States on a limitation of the capacity of underground nuclear tests to a 1-kiloton threshold level, and of the number of nuclear tests to two or three a year.

In short, there is no lack of goodwill on the part of the Soviet Union. We are open to any constructive ideas that will be conducive to real disarmament.

The noble efforts of the leaders of the six States reflected in their joint statement not only meet with full understanding and active support in our country, but also strengthen our confidence in the ultimate triumph of human reason, and stimulate us to still more energetic action for the attainment of the dream of a nuclear-free world, for the survival of civilization on earth.