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Letter dated 6 June 1962 from the Acting Permanent Representative  
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations  
addressed to the Acting Secretary-General

I am transmitting to you herewith the Soviet Government's Statement of  
3 June 1962 concerning United States high-altitude nuclear explosions.

I should be grateful if you would have this statement circulated as an  
official United Nations document.

(Signed) P. MOROZOV  
Acting Permanent Representative of the Union of  
Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations

STATEMENT BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT CONCERNING  
UNITED STATES HIGH-ALTITUDE NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS

The United States Government has announced that it is planned to carry out nuclear explosions at an altitude of several hundred kilometres, including explosions in the megaton range, during the series of nuclear weapons tests which the United States is now conducting in the Pacific.

The Soviet Government has already stated, in connexion with the resumption of nuclear weapons tests by the United States, that in resuming tests the United States Government is committing an aggressive act, is starting a new round in the nuclear arms race and is striking a serious blow at the peoples' hopes for the consolidation of peace and for disarmament. The Soviet Government feels that it must now draw the attention of all States and peoples to the new and extremely dangerous plans of the United States, which call for extending the nuclear arms race into outer space and will thus affect to an even greater extent the interests of all mankind.

The testing of nuclear weapons at high altitudes by the United States may have the direst consequences: it may disturb large expanses of the upper conducting layers of the earth's atmosphere and may result in the creation of areas of radio-wave absorption and in the formation of a new radiation belt in the region of space surrounding the earth. What would this mean?

The disturbance of the ionosphere and the creation of absorbing areas might have the effect of temporarily halting radio communications over wide areas, nor is it possible to say with certainty at the present time how long such an interruption of radio communications would last.

A prolonged interruption of radio communications might disrupt normal life in various parts of the world and, in particular, might create serious difficulties for sea and air transport in the Pacific Ocean area. The effects of United States high-altitude nuclear explosions on the heroic cosmonauts who are today pioneering man's penetration of the great expanses of the universe might prove even graver. If, at the time of an explosion, a spaceship was situated several hundred kilometres from the centre of the blast, the cosmonaut would be exposed to radiation far exceeding a lethal dose, quite apart from the fact that he might be blinded by light rays. On the other hand, if a cosmonaut

found himself in the new radiation area which will be created as a result of the projected United States nuclear explosions in the megaton range, he would be exposed to an extremely heavy dose of radiation. The state of the region of space surrounding the earth would have to be thoroughly investigated from the standpoint of radiation security before it was possible to carry out further flights by cosmonauts and to resume man's penetration of outer space.

Mention should be made of a number of other possible serious effects of high-yield nuclear explosions carried out at high altitudes. The conditions of life on earth are determined by various processes that take place in the upper layers of the atmosphere; if the prevailing equilibrium in these layers is upset, the inevitable result will be to produce long-lasting, largely unpredictable and possibly harmful new phenomena on earth, especially changes in weather conditions.

It is thus quite clear that high-altitude nuclear testing by the United States Government affects the interests of all States and may have a direct impact on the lives of large numbers of people and create major difficulties as regards the further study and conquest of outer space.

There is no question that the United States Government is well aware of all this. It is also aware that its plans to carry out high-altitude nuclear explosions are opposed by eminent scientists in many countries who realize that these explosions may release destructive natural forces which are harmful to mankind.

It has been reported in the world Press that on 22 May 1962 a distinguished group of American scientists addressed a special warning against high-altitude nuclear testing to the President of the United States; included among them were Dr. Szent-Györgyi, winner of the Nobel Prize in medicine; Dr. Shapley, the famous astronomer; Dr. Livingston, professor of physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Dr. Mather, professor of geology at Harvard University and former President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. These world-famous American scientists, deeply alarmed by the plans of the United States Government, emphasized in their appeal that the region of space immediately surrounding the earth is not a suitable one for potentially destructive experiments and that no individual and no country has the right to upset the existing balance of nature.

Bernard Lovell, the world-renowned British scientist and director of the Jodrell Bank observatory, has made several statements opposing high-altitude nuclear testing by the United States. He has called for efforts to prevent the execution of these plans, terming them an insult to the civilized world.

The International Astronomical Union, whose membership includes astronomers and astrophysicists throughout the world, recently adopted a special resolution stating that no one has the right to bring about changes of any considerable magnitude in the earth's environment without international consent and comprehensive international study of the matter, and that any future disruption of the progress of astronomical studies might have grave moral and material consequences.

Yet, the United States Government, far from abandoning its plan to carry out high-altitude nuclear tests, confirmed once more a few days ago that these tests, which occupy a very important place in United States plans for perfecting nuclear weapons, will be carried out in the very near future.

Thus, the peoples of the world have received further confirmation of the fact that, in its policy of preparing for nuclear war, the United States Government has no scruples - nor does it intend to be bound by any in the future - about brutally violating the most elementary standards of international law, which requires States to act in international affairs with due regard for the legitimate interests of all other States, or about openly threatening the security and well-being of peoples.

It is surely cynical on the part of the United States Government organs to state frankly that one of the purposes of the forthcoming high-altitude nuclear tests will be to determine how explosions of that type can be used to put communications systems and radar installations out of commission. That is, after all, tantamount to admitting that the United States is seeking in advance the means of paralysing the defences of peace-loving States and thus safeguarding itself against a retaliatory nuclear blow. The recent statement by the President of the United States that, under certain circumstances, the United States might take the initiative in a nuclear conflict with the Soviet Union should be recalled once again in this connexion.

It should also be borne in mind that the United States Government is preparing to carry out high-altitude nuclear tests in the region of space surrounding the earth just when negotiations on co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space are under way between the Soviet Union and the United States. Thus, the United States Government makes statements in favour of co-operation and of joint efforts with the Soviet Union to speed the process of conquering outer space in the interests of all mankind, but in actual fact it is now extending the nuclear arms race to outer space even though its action in doing so creates new obstacles to the exploration and conquest of outer space and may even threaten the lives and safety of cosmonauts.

It is to be regretted that, as regards co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space, the United States Government's deeds are not in accord with its words.

It may quite properly be asked what right the United States Government has to carry out high-altitude nuclear tests without even consulting the other countries of the world, even though the interests of all of them will be gravely affected.

Needless to say, the United States Government has no right to act in that way, and cannot have such a right. The time is long past when the imperialist Powers could base their international conduct on the principle that might is right. An altogether different power relationship has now emerged in the world; today, any aggressive action that threatens the peace, from whatever quarter it may come, meets with vigorous condemnation by the peace-loving States, which have everything they need to uphold their interests. Let no one forget that.

If the United States Government carries out its plan to set off high-altitude nuclear explosions, it will be assuming full responsibility for a grave deterioration in the international situation. Action by the United States to extend its military preparations into the region of space surrounding the earth will compel the Soviet Union to take appropriate steps to ensure its own security and that of the socialist countries and of all peace-loving countries. Only short-sighted leaders can suppose that the United States will achieve military advantages of any kind by carrying out high-altitude nuclear tests. The Soviet Government will see that that does not happen.

Now, as in the past, the Soviet Union is firmly opposed to any intensification of the nuclear arms race. Defending the interests of the Soviet people, the Soviet Government seeks at all times to strengthen peace, to bring about an early solution to the problem of general and complete disarmament, and to promote international co-operation in every way. It therefore appeals to the United States Government to heed the legitimate demands of the peoples and, in the interests of all mankind, to abandon its high-altitude nuclear explosions and enter into an agreement banning all nuclear weapons tests for all time to come.

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