



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.
GENERALA/40/888
S/17629
13 November 1985
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
fortieth session
Agenda items 50, 57, 58 and 65
CESSATION OF ALL TEST EXPLOSIONS
OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE
IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY
RESOLUTION 39/60 ON THE IMMEDIATE
CESSATION AND PROHIBITION OF
NUCLEAR-WEAPON TESTS
REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS
ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fortieth year

Letter dated 12 November 1985 from the Permanent Representative
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United
Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Annex
I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the reply, dated 6 November 1985, of M. S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to the joint message of the Heads of State or Government of Argentina, Mexico, Sweden, India, the United Republic of Tanzania and Greece (A/40/825-S/17596).

I should be grateful if you would circulate this text as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 50, 57, 58 and 65 of the agenda of its fortieth regular session, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) O. TROYANOVSKY

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Reply of M. S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the joint message of
the Heads of State or Government of Argentina, Mexico, Sweden,
India, the United Republic of Tanzania and Greece

To: Mr. Raúl Alfonsín, President of Argentina
Mr. Miguel de la Madrid, President of Mexico
Mr. Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden
Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India
Mr. Julius Nyerere
Mr. Andreas Papandreou, Prime Minister of Greece

Gentlemen:

The Soviet leadership has examined your joint message with the utmost attention. It confirms that we have common goals and that your proposals to rolling back the arms race, especially the nuclear arms race, and preventing militarization of outer space are consonant with our approach.

You are right in hoping that the forthcoming Soviet-United States summit meeting at Geneva will bring a change for the better in international relations. We, for our part, are actively working for the achievement at that meeting of concrete and tangible agreements which would help to strengthen security and confidence in the world and make it possible to halt the accelerating process of arms build-up and development. That is what the peoples of the world are working for.

Recognizing its responsibility for the fate of the world, the Soviet Union has advanced a set of new initiatives on practically all questions relating to the cessation of the arms race and to disarmament. We have declared that in the event of a ban on the production of space strike weapons, we would be prepared to accept a 50 per cent reduction in the nuclear weapons of the USSR and the United States capable of reaching each other's territory. This is a realistic and practical formula for averting an arms race in outer space and making truly radical reductions in nuclear weapons on earth. The USSR has also taken a number of well-known unilateral steps, including some in the recent past.

I should like to comment in detail on a question to which you give particular attention in your message, namely, the declaration by the USSR and the United States of a 12-month moratorium on nuclear explosions.

We share your view of the significance of such a measure. You are quite right in associating the cessation of tests with hopes for the establishment of a reliable barrier to the nuclear arms race and with a turn towards the practical elimination of nuclear weapons.

The cessation of nuclear tests would indeed make it possible to reduce sharply, and in many respects to make practically impossible, the qualitative upgrading of nuclear weapons, the production of new types of such weapons and the efforts to make them even deadlier than they are today. In those circumstances, the nuclear arms race would be appreciably curtailed.

That is why the Soviet Union attaches so much importance to a complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests and is steadfastly and consistently endeavouring to bring it about.

Striving to move the process of solving this problem off dead centre, the USSR has unilaterally, as from 6 August 1985, stopped conducting any nuclear tests until the end of the year. We have declared that the moratorium would remain in effect even beyond that date if the United States would join in it, that is to say, would also refrain from setting off any nuclear explosions. Thus, whether or not the Soviet moratorium will continue beyond the date mentioned depends entirely on the United States.

Today there exists a real opportunity for finally taking a decisive step, an historic step in the full sense of the word, to halt such tests forever. With regard to the Soviet Union, I repeat that we could agree to extend our moratorium beyond 1 January 1986 if the United States would join in it. What is more, we are ready even now, today, to conclude a treaty prohibiting all nuclear-weapon tests for an indefinite period.

If the necessary political will is displayed, then, in our opinion, it will also be entirely possible to solve the problem of verification. With the national technical means available to the USSR and the United States today, it could be determined without difficulty whether or not nuclear explosions are taking place. This is confirmed by the events of the most recent past.

Furthermore, if agreement were reached on the total prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests everywhere, it would also be possible to find other mutually acceptable methods of verification, including those making use of the possibilities mentioned in your message.

In order to settle the question of a comprehensive ban on nuclear-weapon tests and the question of a temporary moratorium on the conduct of such tests, the two sides must take steps towards each other and must take account of each other's security interests. Any expectations of gaining unilateral advantages in this area are groundless.

We continue to believe in the power of a good example, in the triumph of common sense, which must ultimately prevail in a matter which concerns the very existence of civilization.

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Allow me to express the hope that the efforts in this direction stimulated by the voice of authoritative leaders of States parties to the Delhi Declaration, representing the different continents of our planet, will bear fruit. In this noble cause you can always count on the Soviet Union.

(Signed) M. GORBACHEV
