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

Letter dated 5 May 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 herewith the text of the reply, dated 1 May 1986, of M. S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the message of the leaders of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania.

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

(Signed) Y. V. DUBININ

* A/41/50/Rev.1.

ANNEX

Reply of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, dated 1 May 1986, to the message of the leaders of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania

Mr. Raúl Alfonsín,
President of Argentina

Mr. Andreas Papandreu
Prime Minister of Greece

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi,
Prime Minister of India

Mr. Miguel de la Madrid,
President of Mexico

Mr. Ingvar Carlsson,
Prime Minister of Sweden

Mr. Julius Nyerere,
United Republic of Tanzania

Thank you for your message of 8 April 1986 and for the support you express in it for our efforts to bring about the cessation of nuclear tests. I share the concern you express at the dangerous course of world events and agree with your ideas with regard to the specific steps and actions that could be taken, primarily by the USSR and the United States, in order to remove the nuclear threat that hangs over mankind. I believe that you are completely right in your estimate of the importance of the cessation of nuclear tests as a step that would hamper the further improvement of nuclear weapons and facilitate the reduction of the nuclear threat.

The message was received at a time when the United States, notwithstanding the demands of the world public and disregarding the appeals of statesmen from the various continents of the world, conducted nuclear tests first on 10 April 1986 and later on 22 April 1986. You understand, of course, that that provocative act substantially altered the situation.

We have repeatedly warned, both publicly and in our correspondence with President Reagan, that the Soviet Union cannot extend its unilateral moratorium indefinitely. By conducting neither test explosions nor peaceful explosions over a prolonged period, our country had run a definite risk. During the time of our moratorium, the United States continued to implement large-scale military programmes, including those related to the so-called "Strategic Defense Initiative". The nuclear explosions at the Nevada test range are an integral part of those programmes.

In those circumstances, we were compelled to renounce our voluntarily assumed obligation to conduct no nuclear explosions, since we cannot forgo our own safety and the safety of our allies and friends. I repeat, it was the actions of the United States that compelled us to take such a decision.

However, even in this new situation, the Soviet Union is firmly determined to continue steadfastly and consistently its efforts to solve the crucial problem of the total cessation of nuclear tests, a problem which brooks no delay. We continue to count on your valuable support in this matter.

I wish to emphasize that the Soviet Union is doing everything necessary to see to it that a bilateral Soviet-United States moratorium becomes a reality. We are ready to return at any moment to the question of a mutual moratorium if the United States will stop conducting nuclear tests. We supported the idea you expressed earlier to the effect that the USSR and the United States should refrain from conducting nuclear tests until the next summit meeting. Even today, after an eight-month interruption in the conduct of nuclear tests in the USSR, we are in no hurry to renew them. However, Washington's reaction to all this remains negative.

I may add that we cannot avoid regarding Washington's widely publicized "reply" to our appeals for ending nuclear explosions - namely, its invitation to our experts to be present at the Nevada explosions - as a mockery of common sense. By this method, they want to place us in the false position of "collaborating" in the arms race, not putting an end to it.

The main problem remains that of prohibiting nuclear weapon tests at the level of international law. It can be solved through negotiations. In order to move that process off dead centre, every available possibility must be tried. As you know, we proposed to the United States the undertaking of bilateral negotiations on the cessation of nuclear tests. The USSR also favours the resumption of trilateral negotiations on the subject and recently brought that question once again to the attention of Mrs. Thatcher.

There is a good chance for multilateral negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament. Lastly, we are also prepared to extend to underground nuclear tests the validity of the Moscow Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in Three Environments.

The Soviet Union wishes to emphasize its readiness to consider and apply such control measures, including the measures proposed by you, as would provide reliable assurance that an eventual agreement to discontinue nuclear tests will be strictly observed by all.

In your message, you rightly associate the question of the Soviet-United States summit meeting with progress in arms limitation and with the solution of the problem of nuclear tests.

At the Geneva meeting, the President of the United States and I agreed to continue the dialogue we had initiated, which, in our opinion must lead to practical results, chiefly on security questions. However, the present actions of

the United States run counter to the task of searching for ways to improve international relations and striving to strengthen the positive trends that emerged as a result of the Geneva meeting. Those actions - I state this plainly - have also directly damaged the dialogue between the USSR and the United States.

Nevertheless, since the question of ending nuclear tests is so urgent, we proposed convening in the near future a meeting in Europe specifically devoted to that question. That meeting would not be a substitute for the one we agreed on at Geneva. At the European meeting we could, in principle, agree to discontinue nuclear tests. After that there could be appropriate discussions to work out the text of an agreement on the subject. Those proposals of ours still remain open.

The Soviet Union regards the cessation and prohibition of nuclear tests as the most important component of the movement towards implementing the concept of a denuclearized world. You may be sure that in striving to realize it, we are prepared to take the most daring steps, provided that the principle of mutual security is respected. We hope that you too will continue your joint efforts to promote the establishment of constructive and business-like co-operation between all peace-loving States in their efforts to ensure international security under the conditions of a nuclear-free world. The most important thing now is to halt mankind's slide towards the nuclear abyss. That is a matter that concerns each and every one of us.
