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CESSATION OF ALL NUCLEAR-TEST EXPLOSIONS.

URGENT NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 41/54 ON THE
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ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Note verbale dated 18 September 1987 from the Permanent
Representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist
Republic to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, in connection with General Assembly resolution 41/46 B and also resolutions 41/46 A, 41/47 and 41/54 regarding the immediate cessation and prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, has the honour to state the following:

The Byelorussian SSR regards the immediate cessation and complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests as a high priority of the international community. At a time when the level of the nuclear threat is extremely high, and urgent disarmament measures are needed to strengthen the guarantees of security for mankind, steps to prohibit nuclear-weapon tests could be taken on an immediate basis. In this area there is a solid degree of preparedness - moral, political and technological - on the part of the international community for serious action.

It has rightly been noted that mankind is at present at a crossroads of history. The right choice between the two courses - building up the nuclear threat or achieving a nuclear-free, non-violent world - can be made only with new political thinking, abandoning outdated strategic dogma. Steps to prohibit nuclear tests would help us to cover the first lap of the journey in the right direction.

It will be recalled that the Soviet Union, motivated by the universal interests of mankind, has declared its willingness to abandon, naturally on a reciprocal basis, its status as a nuclear Power, and has proposed a serious programme for ensuring security through disarmament, which provides for the phased elimination of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction by the year 2000. It has also taken a number of bold steps to facilitate movement along this path. They include the Soviet proposals which at the negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States opened up prospects for the first measures of real nuclear disarmament: complete elimination of two categories of nuclear missiles. These steps also include the USSR's unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions, which was in force for more than 18 months in 1985-1987. The willingness of the USSR to restore the moratorium at any time on a reciprocal basis with the United States keeps the door open for the immediate cessation of nuclear explosions.

The Byelorussian SSR is in favour of immediately solving the problem of a complete nuclear-test ban and, to that end, beginning full-scale negotiations involving the USSR and the United States. The Soviet Union has not only repeatedly declared its desire to engage in such negotiations, but has also taken a considerable number of substantial measures and steps to create the most favourable conditions possible for the initiation and successful conduct of the negotiations. An important example is its willingness to accept interim measures to limit the size of nuclear explosions and the number of nuclear-weapon tests. The involvement of the appropriate services proposed by the group of "six States" could facilitate the attainment and implementation of an understanding on verification.

In order to start things moving, the treaty could initially include just the USSR and the United States, rather than all the leading nuclear Powers.

It is essential for the bilateral aspect to be complemented by the multilateral aspect. The Byelorussian SSR believes that the Conference on Disarmament should conduct parallel negotiations, which would bring about a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing by all States. The socialist States parties to the Conference on Disarmament, at its summer session in 1987, submitted a document entitled "Basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests". Incorporating the positive results of efforts in this direction, the document is designed to ensure that from the very outset the negotiations are serious. Considerable attention is devoted in the document to large-scale verification measures. Along with other measures, it would be useful to establish international networks for seismic and radiation verification. There is clearly a need to convene a special group of scientific experts, which would submit to the Conference on Disarmament agreed recommendations on the structure and functions of a system of verification for any possible agreement on the non-conduct of nuclear-weapon tests.

The international community must not ignore any of the constructive ways of achieving the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. In this connection, the Byelorussian SSR is in favour of the proposal made in resolution 41/46 B to convene a conference in order to expand the scope of the prohibitions laid down in the Moscow Treaty of 1963 Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, to which it is party. This would also be in line with the obligations under that Treaty.

The strengthening of the existing régime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the addition to it of a full-scale prohibition of tests of such weapons, as well as the introduction of a strict system of appropriate verification, are measures which, when nuclear arsenals are eliminated, could provide effective guarantees that they will not be reconstituted. A nuclear-free world will be the most important component of a comprehensive system of international peace and security. At this decisive historical juncture, the efforts of States should be directed constantly towards creating such a system.

The Permanent Mission of the Byelorussian SSR to the United Nations requests that this letter be circulated as a General Assembly document under agenda items 49, 50, 57, 62, 66 and 73.

The Permanent Mission of the Byelorussian SSR to the United Nations takes this opportunity to convey to the Secretary-General the renewed assurances of its highest consideration.
