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LETTER DATED 6 SEPTEMBER 1958 FROM THE ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL.

New York, 6 September 1958

I have the honour to forward herewith the replies of Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, to a correspondent of the newspaper Pravda on the subject of discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests, together with the text of a note on the same subject addressed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the United States Embassy in Moscow on 30 August 1958.

I should be glad if you would arrange to have these texts issued as an official United Nations document and circulated to all States Members of the United Nations.

(Signed) G. ARKADEV
Acting Permanent Representative
of the USSR to the United Nations

NOTE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE USSR
DATED 30 AUGUST 1958

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America and, with reference to the Embassy's note dated 22 August 1958, has the honour to inform the Embassy that the Government of the USSR is prepared to commence negotiations on 31 October 1958 between representatives of the USSR, the United States of America and the United Kingdom with a view to concluding an agreement on the permanent discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests by States, with the establishment of appropriate controls of the observance of such an agreement. The Soviet Government believes that the most suitable place for holding such negotiations would be Geneva. In order to avoid any protraction of the negotiations, it would be desirable to agree beforehand to limit their duration to a definite period. For its part, the Soviet Government proposes that this period be fixed at two to three weeks.

This note is accompanied by the text of a statement by Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, setting forth the point of view of the Soviet Government on the matters referred to in President Eisenhower's statement of 22 August.

REPLIES OF MR. N.S. KHRUSHCHEV, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS OF THE USSR, TO THE QUESTIONS OF A PRAVDA CORRESPONDENT
CONCERNING THE DISCONTINUANCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTS

Question: In the light of the statements of President Eisenhower and the United Kingdom Government published on 22 August, how do you assess the position of the United States and United Kingdom Governments on the question of discontinuing nuclear weapons tests?

Reply: Unfortunately, these statements provide no evidence that the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom are prepared to follow the Soviet Union's example and discontinue immediately the testing of nuclear weapons. In essence, they are holding to their old course of evading, on various pretexts, the assumption of an obligation to discontinue nuclear weapons tests forthwith. They have been doing this for a number of years, since May 1955, when the Soviet Government proposed that agreement should be reached on the immediate discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests.

Sharing the ardent aspiration of the peoples that test explosions of nuclear weapons should be stopped and prompted by the desire to make a practical start towards a general discontinuance of nuclear tests, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, on 31 March 1958, adopted a decree concerning the unilateral discontinuance by the Soviet Union of all atomic and hydrogen weapons tests. We took this action for the purpose of achieving common agreement on the general discontinuance of nuclear tests, even though we realized that such a step on our part might place the Soviet Union at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the NATO countries. In discontinuing the tests, the Soviet Union called on the United States and the United Kingdom to follow its example, in order that a stop might be put to atomic and hydrogen bomb testing everywhere and for all time.

The United States and United Kingdom Governments, however, refused to follow the example of the Soviet Union. They continued and are still continuing to carry out test explosions, thereby showing their true attitude in the matter of discontinuing atomic and hydrogen weapons tests.

Can it be said that the statements of the United States and United Kingdom Governments of 22 August testify to any changes in their positions on this matter? No, it cannot. If the Governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom were really striving for complete discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests, they should have discontinued such tests immediately. The statements of the United States and United Kingdom Governments show that these Governments are continuing to seek every possible loop-hole in order to avoid an immediate discontinuance of nuclear tests. This becomes especially clear if we consider the reservations and manifestly far-fetched conditions which the Governments of the Western Powers attach to their proposals.

What, exactly, is being proposed by the Governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom?

First of all, instead of announcing their immediate renunciation of testing, the United States and United Kingdom Governments speak merely of a temporary suspension of nuclear tests for a period of one year. It is obvious to everyone, however, that such a brief suspension of tests is completely meaningless, since one year is precisely the time required for preparing the next series of tests.

Can this be taken as evidence of a serious approach to the question and of a sincere desire on the part of the Governments of the Western Powers to put a stop to atomic and hydrogen weapons tests? It certainly cannot. It is more like a mockery of the hopes of the peoples who are demanding that test explosions should be ended once and for all.

Admittedly, the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom state that they will be prepared to extend this suspension of tests for further successive periods of one year. However, they attach such reservations and conditions to their consent that it becomes obvious that they are not even thinking of refraining from carrying out further experimental explosions of nuclear weapons.

One of the conditions put forward is the demand for the establishment of an effectively functioning system of control over the discontinuance of tests. This "condition" is, of course, an artificial one, since it has long been known that modern science guarantees the possibility of detecting any nuclear explosions and

therefore control over the observance of an agreement on the discontinuance of tests is readily feasible. If any proof is needed of the utterly contrived nature of this condition, it is sufficient to recall the results of the recently concluded conference of experts of eight countries at Geneva.

The Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom declare further that they will be willing to extend the one-year agreement to suspend nuclear tests only if "satisfactory progress" has been made in settling the general problem of disarmament. But everyone knows that it is the Governments of the Western Powers and those Governments alone which, by persistently adhering to a policy based on an armaments race and atomic blackmail, have year after year frustrated the achievement of agreement on matters of disarmament. In view of this situation, how is it possible to believe that they really want a discontinuance of tests when they put forward such a condition? Could there be any more reliable means of frustrating the whole matter of discontinuing nuclear weapons tests than to lay down conditions of this kind?

Some people in the West are ready to exult over the statements of the United States and United Kingdom Governments on a possible suspension of their nuclear tests and are praising these statements as a peace-loving act. It must be stated frankly that no one who wants these tests really discontinued can be enthusiastic about these statements.

A rather peculiar situation has been created: at first, for a long time we were told that the question of discontinuing nuclear tests could be settled only as an integral part of a broad agreement on disarmament. When the incongruity of this position of the Western Powers became obvious to all, these Powers retreated under the pressure of public opinion and declared that they were prepared to consider the question of discontinuing tests separately, as an independent problem. At the same time, however, they began working hard to inflate the problem of controlling the discontinuance of tests, exaggerating the difficulties of such control - contrary to the real facts of the situation - and going so far as to assert that control was impossible. Now, when it has become clear to everyone that

control is completely practicable, Washington and London are again saying that the solution of the problem of discontinuing tests is possible only in conjunction with the settlement of other disarmament problems.

Thus, the vicious circle created by the opponents of an agreement on a general discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests is once more complete.

After all this, how is it possible to lend credence to the statements of the United States and United Kingdom Governments concerning their alleged desire to discontinue tests? Would it not be more correct to assume that, once again, an effort is being made merely to lull the vigilance of the peoples, who are expressing legitimate concern over the continuing nuclear weapons tests which are being carried out by the United States and the United Kingdom, and, moreover, on an increasingly broad scale?

Question: In your opinion, what is the significance, for the settlement of the question of the general discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests, of the results of the recently concluded conference at Geneva of experts from eight countries on methods of detecting nuclear explosions?

Reply: The significance of the Geneva conference should be considered, first and foremost, to lie in the fact that it finally disposed of the myth that control over compliance with an agreement for the discontinuance of nuclear tests was impossible. It is well known that this myth was circulated by certain circles among the Western Powers, especially in the United States of America, with the object of preventing a discontinuance of tests. The experts who met at Geneva, and they included experts from the Western Powers, reached the unanimous conclusion that any nuclear explosion could be detected and that effective control of a discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests was completely feasible. We note with satisfaction that the conclusions of the conference of experts fully confirm the correctness of the point of view which the Soviet Government has always maintained on this question and demonstrate the falseness of the position of the Western Powers. The results of the Geneva conference compel the opponents of a general discontinuance of tests to acknowledge the utter worthlessness and anti-scientific nature of their arguments.

atomic and hydrogen weapons tests, of course cannot permit the interests of Soviet state security to suffer as a result of these acts by the Western Powers. We are guided in this matter by the well-known decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR dated 31 March 1958, in which it was stated that if other Powers possessing atomic and hydrogen weapons continued tests of those weapons, the Government of the USSR would be free to act in the matter of the carrying out of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests by the Soviet Union, having regard to the interests of its security. Would it be right of us, the leaders of the Soviet State, in the face of such acts by the Western Powers, to ignore the vital and legitimate interests of our national security?

The acts of the United States and the United Kingdom, which are contrary to the will of the peoples, release the Soviet Union from the obligation it unilaterally assumed, counting on the goodwill of the Governments of the Western Powers in the matter of an immediate and general discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests.

Question. What is the Soviet Government's attitude towards the proposal of the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom that negotiations between the three Powers for the discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests should begin on 31 October?

Reply. The Soviet Union has more than once proposed to the United States and the United Kingdom the holding of negotiations for the immediate discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests by all Powers possessing such weapons. The Governments of those Powers have now stated their readiness to start negotiations on 31 October 1958. This date is acceptable to the Soviet Government. We believe that the most suitable place for the negotiations would be Geneva, where recently the experts dealing with the question of technical methods for controlling the observance of an agreement on the discontinuance of nuclear tests successfully completed their work. However, we are proceeding on the assumption that the purpose of such negotiations should be the conclusion of an agreement on the permanent discontinuance of tests of all types of atomic and hydrogen weapons by all States. Only in that case will the negotiations meet the interests of the peoples and not be used as a screen for concealing an unwillingness to seek an agreement.

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The Soviet Government has carefully studied the results of the work of the Geneva conference of experts and deems it necessary to state that it agrees with all the conclusions and recommendations in the report of the conference concerning a system of control over a general discontinuance of nuclear tests.

In the light of the results of this conference, there can now be no excuses or justifications for rejecting an immediate and general discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests, even on the part of those who previously resorted to excuses of this kind, deceiving the credulous.

Question. The Soviet public is disturbed by the fact that the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, far from following the example of the Soviet Union, which unilaterally discontinued all atomic and hydrogen weapons tests, have begun to carry out such tests even more intensively. What statement can be made concerning the position of the Soviet Government with regard to these acts of the Western Powers?

Reply. It is true that the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom have refused to follow the Soviet Union's example and are continuing to carry out test explosions of atomic and hydrogen bombs at an increasing rate. Even after the unilateral discontinuance of tests by the Soviet Union and after the Soviet Government made its proposal to the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom for an immediate and general discontinuance of all tests, the United States began a very large series of atomic and hydrogen bomb tests in the Pacific. Between 28 April and 26 July alone they carried out over thirty nuclear explosions. The United Kingdom has also carried out a number of test explosions of a thermonuclear weapon. Moreover, on 22 August, the very day that the Government of the United Kingdom announced to the world that it was ready to begin negotiations for the suspension of nuclear tests, it began a new series of nuclear weapons explosions. The Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom are using the discontinuance of nuclear tests by the Soviet Union to gain unilateral military advantages for themselves.

The Soviet Government which, for its part, has done everything possible to ensure a positive solution of the question of a general discontinuance of

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We are completely unable to accept the reservations and conditions which the Western Powers attach to their statement of readiness to participate in the negotiations, since to accept them would be to foredoom the negotiations to failure. We also consider that, in order to avoid any protraction of the negotiations, it would be useful to reach agreement beforehand on their duration. Bearing in mind the positive results of the Geneva conference of experts, we believe that these negotiations could be concluded within two to three weeks.

However, it would of course be wrong if the preparations for such negotiations were to distract attention from the importance of an early settlement of the problem of a discontinuance of nuclear tests by all States. In particular, it would be a great mistake if there were any lessening of interest in this question on the part of the United Nations, and this includes the forthcoming thirteenth session of the General Assembly which, in our opinion, should speak with its authoritative voice on this question which is deeply agitating all mankind.
