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**IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 40/80 ON THE IMMEDIATE
CESSATION AND PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR-WEAPON TESTS**

Letter dated 31 March 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 a statement made on Soviet television by M. S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

I should be grateful if you would distribute this text 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

Statement made by M. S. Gorbachev on Soviet television
on 29 March 1996

At our meeting today I should like to share with you my views on the present situation regarding the Soviet Union's moratorium on nuclear tests.

Several days ago the United States carried out another nuclear explosion. It is obvious to us all that its timing was not accidental. The explosion was conducted shortly before the expiration of the moratorium declared unilaterally by the Soviet Union. Yesterday it became known that in a few days' time, in the very near future, the United States intends to detonate yet another nuclear device.

Soviet people, like all people of good will in all countries, are indignant at such actions by the United States. They write about this in their letters to the Party's Central Committee and request an assessment of the present situation. How, they ask, should all of this be understood? What conclusions should be drawn from this? Why did the United States take such a step? How does our country's leadership intend to act in these circumstances?

We consider it our duty to respond to these messages. And this, indeed, is the reason for our meeting today.

I must say frankly that we regard the present actions of the United States Administration, which is continuing nuclear tests in spite of the peoples' urgent demands, as a pointed challenge to the Soviet Union, and not only to it but also to the whole world, to all peoples, including the American people, too.

At a time when whole mountains of combustible nuclear material have been stockpiled in the world, the issue of halting nuclear tests has acquired enormous importance. And this is understandable,

Firstly, halting nuclear tests is the most realistic way of achieving an end to the arms race. Without such tests it is impossible either to improve or to develop new types of nuclear weapons.

In short, if together with the United States and the other nuclear Powers we were to reach agreement on ceasing nuclear explosions, this would make it possible to break the deadlock in the whole process of nuclear disarmament.

Furthermore, continued testing causes enormous harm - which has not yet, perhaps, been fully studied - to nature and the very environment in which we all live. Do we not feel obliged to show concern for our own home? And not only for ourselves, but also for our children and grandchildren.

And lastly, in this difficult endeavour there is no need to start, as it were, from scratch. Some headway has been made and joint experience acquired: what I mean is that tests have not been conducted for many years now in the atmosphere, under water or on land. Neither have there been nuclear explosions in outer space.

In view of precisely these circumstances, and having **carefully weighed all the** proe and cons, the **Soviet Union undertook eight months ago, on the day of the fortieth anniversary of the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an initiative of extraordinary importance - to cease all nuclear explosions either for military or for peaceful purposes - and called upon the United States and the other nuclear Powers to follow its example and begin moving towards nuclear disarmament.**

I have already had occasion to say that it was not easy for us to take such a decision under conditions of unabated tension in the international situation. If, as you like, this step necessitated both an awareness of the responsibility which rests with the Governments of the nuclear Powers and the requisite political will. In acting as it did, the Soviet leadership had the mandate of its people, who know the value of peace and genuinely strive for its preservation and consolidation and for co-operation with all peoples.

We acted as we did out of **the deep conviction that the world has entered a stage in its development which calls for new approaches to matters of international security. Today, in the nuclear and space age, it is impossible to think in the same terms as in the past. All people must ultimately realize that everything has radically changed. And it is now a question not merely of the preservation of peace, but of mankind's survival.**

These, in effect, were **the reasons for our decision to announce the unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests.**

The **good initiative of the Soviet Union - and I am immensely pleased to say this - has met with understanding and broad approval in the world. Our action has been highly appreciated by the working people of all countries: communists and social democrats, liberals and conservatives, Christians and Muslims, a great number of public organizations, prominent political figures, scientists and cultural figures, and millions of ordinary people.**

How, though, has the other side conducted itself? I mean the United States Administration.

In words, **it stands for the elimination of nuclear weapons. A good many statements have been made by it on this score. In fact, however, a gap between words and practical policy has again become apparent. Despite the Soviet Union's call and example, and the persistent demands both of the American people and of peoples throughout the world, the United States Government has continued to carry out nuclear tests.**

We had placed certain hopes in the Geneva meeting with the President of the United States and expected to reach agreement with him on this matter, too. As you will recall, encouraging statements were made there by each side and also jointly: that nuclear war is inadmissible, that such a war cannot be won, and that neither side would seek nuclear superiority,

The results of the Geneva meeting prompted us to make yet another good-will gesture - to extend the moratorium until 31 March of this year. **We thereby showed evidence of our responsible attitude towards dialogue between the leaders of the**

two Powers and hoped, of course, for steps in response by the United States Administration.

I think you will agree that our statement of 15 January of **this year, which gave details of a concrete and realistic programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons, illustrates once again our sincere intention to put an end to nuclear confrontation. When we took that step, the least of our considerations was to score, as journalists say in such cases, gratuitous propaganda points, or to outwit or outperform the other side.**

We consider such an approach to the burning problems of contemporary politics to be inadmissible. Our actions were dictated by our responsibility both to the Soviet people and to other peoples, a responsibility to remove the nuclear threat and to preserve and strengthen peace.

In February, the **leader8 of six non-aligned States, giving expression to the prevailing trends of world public opinion, addressed an urgent appeal to the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States to refrain from exploding nuclear devices up to the time of a further Soviet-American meeting. Our response to this was one of agreement.**

It seemed natural that the United States Administration should support the initiative of the Soviet Union by means of practical steps, respond to popular expectations and, ultimately, reaffirm through action its own statements as pronounced in Geneva. But the result was otherwise.

It is patently evident that the ruling clique of the United States has placed the narrowly mercenary interests of military-industrial circles above the interests of mankind as a whole, and of its own people. The way in which all this is done is also of some importanaer ostentatiously, arrogantly and with disdain for the opinion of the international community. It shows neither a sense of realism nor a sense of responsibility.

It becomes ever more apparent that the ruling circles of the United States are continuing to emphasize pursuit of a militaristic approach and to rely on force as a means of dictating their will to other countries and peoples. Meanwhile, statements are made for all to hear to the effect that it is precisely by means such as these that they will bring influence to bear on the policy of the Soviet Union.

What can we say about this? These endeavours serve no purpose. No one has ever before succeeded in using the methods of power politics against our State, and such methods are now simply ridiculous. And the peoples of other countries are ever more vigorously rejecting the use of power politics in international relations as being obsolete.

The Soviet political leadership is now faced with the difficult question of how to react to such behaviour on the part of the United States.

Our position is clear. We believe that the world has entered a period of responsible decision-making - most definitely, a period of responsible decision-making. We shall not abandon our policy of preserving and strengthening peace, which was quite unequivocally confirmed by the Twenty-seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In accordance with the wishes of its people, the Soviet State will continue in the future to step up efforts to guarantee universal security. We shall do this by means of a process of interaction with all countries and their peoples.

With regard to our unilateral moratorium, I can say that it will, as before, operate until 31 March 1986. But even after that date we shall continue, as announced, to refrain from exploding nuclear devices if the United States does likewise. We once again give the American Administration the chance to take a responsible decision - to put an end to nuclear explosions.

Otherwise the Soviet Union will resume tests. This must be absolutely clear. We regret this, but we shall be forced to do so, since we cannot forgo our own security and the security of our allies. I say all this in order that there should be no reservations on this matter.

Meanwhile, I emphasize again and again that our principal intention is to stop the nuclear-arms race. The simplest, clearest and most effective step in that direction would be to halt nuclear explosions.

We have proposed that talks should be started immediately with a view to a total ban on nuclear-arms tests, to include verification issues. Any variants are acceptable to the Soviet Union - bilateral Soviet-American talks, trilateral talks with the participation of the United Kingdom, or multilateral talks within the framework of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

We have now reached the conclusion that the situation requires urgent action. It is not yet too late to stop the nuclear-arms race. What is needed is a first major step in that direction. A halt to nuclear tests by all, most importantly by the Soviet Union and the United States, but also by other nuclear Powers, could constitute such a step. We attach enormous importance to the solution of this problem, which affects the destiny of all peoples.

I am prepared to meet President Reagan at the earliest opportunity in London, Rome or any other European capital which may agree to receive us, with a view to reaching agreement on this question, and I do not see any insurmountable obstacles to this, whether of a political, technical or any other nature. What is wanted here is the essential political will and understanding of our mutual responsibility. We propose that we should meet, exchange opinions on this vitally important problem and issue instructions for the drafting of an appropriate agreement.

We hope that this proposal by the Soviet Union will be duly evaluated and properly interpreted by the President of the United States and by the Governments of the countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, of the whole world.

Time waits for no one. On behalf of the Soviet people we appeal to the American people and their Government, to the peoples and Governments of all countries, to take active and practical steps which would translate the ban on nuclear explosions into reality and make it an immutable touchstone of inter-State relations.

Mankind stands at a boundary which requires exercise of the utmost responsibility. The consequences of the nuclear race may become dangerously unpredictable. We must act together. This is a matter for each and every one of us.

It was about all this that I wanted to speak to you, dear comrades, at our meeting today. Goodbye.
