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LETTER DATED 14 DECEMBER 1961 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

I enclose herewith the statement of the Government of the USSR, dated  
13 December 1961, regarding the question of the cessation of nuclear weapons  
tests.

I request that you will take steps to circulate this statement of the Soviet  
Government as an official document of the United Nations General Assembly.

(Signed) V. ZORIN  
Permanent Representative of the  
USSR to the United Nations

13 December 1961

STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE USSR

Desirous of contributing in every possible way to the swiftest solution of the problem of general and complete disarmament, so as to rid the world of armaments and wars for all time, the Soviet Government put forward new proposals in connexion with the resumption of the Geneva negotiations on 28 November 1961. These proposals were simple and clear; they provided for the conclusion, forthwith, of a treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, under water or in outer space, with the exercise of mutual control through national means of nuclear blast detection. It was proposed by the Soviet Government, in relation to underground tests of nuclear weapons, that a moratorium on such tests be established pending an agreement on a system for controlling underground blasts, as part of an international system for controlling the implementation of the programme of general and complete disarmament. By putting forward these proposals, the Soviet Union demonstrated its willingness to abandon the testing of nuclear weapons, despite the fact that it had carried out a considerably smaller number of experimental explosions of such weapons than had the Western Powers - the United States of America, Britain and France.

The new Soviet proposals created every possibility for a speedy agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons tests. That was the way in which the Soviet proposals were regarded by those circles and Governments that display a genuine concern for the well-being of peoples and are striving for the speediest settlement of the disarmament problem.

It can only be regretted that the Soviet proposals did not meet with the approval of the Governments of those Powers on which the task of stopping all testing of nuclear weapons depends - the United States, Britain and France. The Western Powers, instead of seeking agreement on the basis put forward by the Soviet Union, attempted once more to shunt the negotiations onto the old track which had already led to an impasse.

The Western Powers had much to say in the General Assembly about their ardent desire to rid the peoples of experimental nuclear explosions. However, are those statements confirmed by deeds? No. The facts speak to the contrary.

In connexion with the resumption of the Geneva negotiations, the State Department of the United States issued a declaration showing directly that the United States intended to carry on with nuclear weapons testing. The United Kingdom Government voiced a similar opinion, stating that it "cannot bind itself by commitments not to hold or not to support the holding of further nuclear tests". The French Government, which by its actions had contributed to the failure of the previous attempts to reach agreement on the cessation of nuclear tests, likewise did not express its willingness to assume the obligation of discontinuing tests of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, the United States is already holding underground nuclear tests and making extensive preparations for other types of nuclear testing. On 3 December, after the negotiations had been resumed at Geneva, the United States set off an underground nuclear explosion at the Nevada test site. The United States Government announced another nuclear explosion for 10 December at the New Mexico test site, before it took place. On 2 November the United States Government issued orders for preparations to be made for tests of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere. It is also known that plans are being worked out for the use of testing grounds in the United States Trust Territories in the Pacific for nuclear weapons tests.

When it came forward with the new proposals creating the opportunity for an early agreement on the cessation of nuclear weapons tests of all kinds, the Soviet Government issued a warning that, if any of the Western Powers held nuclear tests, the Soviet Union, by force of circumstances, would be faced by the need to draw for itself the necessary conclusions. It repeated the warnings which it had given in the statement of 4 December, emphasizing in particular that if the Western Powers continued to engage in tests of nuclear weapons, including underground tests, the Soviet Union would be forced to conduct, in order to ensure its security, such nuclear weapons tests as it deemed necessary for the strengthening of its defensive capacity.

The Soviet Government genuinely hoped that the leading circles of the Western Powers would evaluate the situation rightly and realize the need to show, for their part, goodwill and the desire to conclude an agreement with the Soviet Union. The facts, however, indicate that the Western Powers are still not ready to take the path of ending the testing of nuclear weapons.

Concerned as it is to strengthen the defensive capacity of its homeland, and to ensure the security of the Soviet people as well as of other peaceful peoples, the Soviet Government will be forced to take the decision to hold nuclear weapons tests in the Soviet Union, in order to maintain the country's defensive capacity permanently at its proper level. At the same time the Soviet Government will continue, as before, to make every effort to achieve agreement on the cessation of nuclear weapons tests of every kind.

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