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CONCLUSION OF A TREATY ON THE COMPLETE AND GENERAL
PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPON TESTS

Note verbale dated 17 February 1977 from the Permanent Mission of the
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations addressed to
the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to inform him of the following.

The complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests represents one of the most urgent tasks connected with the cessation of the arms race, the reduction of weapons stockpiles, and disarmament.

The pressing need for the conclusion of an international treaty on the prohibition by all countries everywhere of nuclear weapon tests was underlined once again by the latest decisions of the United Nations. As is well known, at its thirtieth session the General Assembly of the United Nations, acting on the initiative of the Soviet Union, called upon all nuclear weapon States to enter into negotiations on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests with the participation of non-nuclear-weapon States. At its thirty-first session, the General Assembly once again declared that such negotiations should be held as soon as possible and, by an overwhelming majority, adopted resolution 31/89 on that question.

Among other things, the aforementioned resolution drew special attention to the fact that, during the thirty-first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, proposals had been made and relevant documents submitted with a view to finding a compromise basis for a generally acceptable understanding regarding the supervision of compliance with an international agreement on the cessation of all types of nuclear weapon tests. In that connexion, it is well known that the revised

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draft treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests which the Soviet Union submitted for consideration at the thirty-first session of the General Assembly (A/C.1/31/9) has received wide publicity and recognition. This has meant the opening up of new possibilities of reaching a generally acceptable understanding on this question. Another factor which must be taken into account is that there is a group of 26 non-nuclear-weapon States which has been officially designated by the President of the General Assembly to participate in the relevant negotiations and which has declared its readiness to carry out the duty bestowed upon it by the General Assembly.

Under these circumstances, the Soviet Union reaffirms its readiness to participate in negotiations on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/89.

The Soviet Union believes that the conclusion of an international treaty prohibiting all nuclear weapon tests would help to curb the arms race, would promote disarmament as well as the further development and strengthening of the process of détente, and would help to remove the danger of nuclear conflict. The problem of the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests is ripe for a solution. It would therefore be advisable to enter into negotiations forthwith on the conclusion of an appropriate treaty with the participation of non-nuclear-weapon States.

The Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics requests that this letter be circulated as an official General Assembly document under item 48 of the preliminary list.
