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His Excellency
Ronald W. REAGAN
The President of the
United States of America
Washington, D.C.

RR

December 5, 1985

Dear Mr. President,

In this message of mine I would like to express some considerations and proposals as a follow-up to our exchange of views.

After the Geneva meeting we have a common task - to do all that is necessary and possible so that its results which were met with satisfaction everywhere, be reinforced by practical agreements and measures leading to the termination of the arms race, strengthening of the security of all states and revitalization of the situation in the world. This is precisely what is expected of us as leaders of the two major powers.

The Soviet-American talks on nuclear and space weapons are, of course, of special importance. We favor achieving real progress at these talks, as well as at the conference in Stockholm, at the negotiations in Vienna and in other fora.

But there is an issue where concrete and rather weighty and tangible results can be achieved already now. This is the issue of stopping nuclear tests.

The Soviet Union unilaterally introduced since August 6 and has been observing a moratorium on all nuclear explosions. There is no need to dwell upon the seriousness of this step. To take such a decision was not a simple matter for us. The Soviet side has its own programs, concrete practical needs. For that reason a time

period through which the moratorium would remain in effect was set until January 1, 1986. As we have stated, the USSR is ready to refrain from conducting nuclear explosions even further, though, naturally, on the basis of reciprocity. I wish to reaffirm that again. If, however, no positive response to this goodwill gesture of ours comes from the US, the unilateral commitments of the USSR will be void after the announced date.

We would not like it to happen. Although we do not have much time at our disposal, there is still enough time for the American side to carefully analyze this question again and to review it in broad political terms. I wish to reiterate the thought which I have already expressed to you: if there is a genuine intention to work towards stopping the nuclear arms race, a mutual moratorium cannot be objected to, while it would bring great benefits.

Indeed - what can be the objective obstacles to our joint suspension of nuclear weapon tests? I am convinced that there are no such obstacles. For in that case our countries would, in fact, be in an equal position.

Sometimes, of course, they refer to the difficulties of verification. But there is no basis whatsoever to dramatize this problem, either. We both know that the USSR and the US possess very sophisticated national technical means making it possible to verify reliably the fact of the absence of nuclear explosions. An additional guarantee of ensuring the confidence of the sides that the moratorium is being observed would be renouncing - as the Soviet Union has done now - any nuclear explosions - for peaceful, as well as military purposes.

If, however, some doubts regarding verification remain, this, given agreement on the main point, is a problem which, in our view, can be solved. One can take up, for example, the proposal of the Delhi "six" - Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Tanzania and Sweden - regarding the creation of verification mechanisms on the territories of these countries. We have already expressed a positive attitude to that.

Moreover. If a mutual moratorium on nuclear explosions is going to be introduced now, we are prepared - and this is what we propose - to agree at the same time on the following: on a reciprocal

basis to give on appropriate requests the opportunity to the observers of both sides to visit the locations of ambiguous phenomena in order to remove possible doubts that such phenomena can be related to nuclear explosions.

In other words, the issue of a mutual moratorium on nuclear explosions is ripe and can be resolved as a practical matter. And if one is to speak of the political significance of such a joint step, then, certainly, it would give quite a definite signal to other nuclear powers, too, would create a qualitatively new situation much more favorable for a positive development of the process started in Geneva, for taking effective practical steps to curb the nuclear arms race.

The resumption of the trilateral negotiations on the general and complete prohibition of nuclear weapon tests would also be a tangible step in that direction. The overwhelming majority of states quite definitely speaks in favor of that, as was clearly stated in the U.N., at the recent NPT review conference, in other prestigious international organizations.

I would like to reaffirm our readiness for such negotiations and I specifically propose that they be resumed next January, for example, in Geneva. I believe that, should you accept, we could jointly come to terms on this matter with the British, too.

Mr. President, I found it necessary to address in this message a very important, serious question in the spirit of frankness which permeated our meetings and conversations in Geneva.

On behalf of the Soviet leadership I would like to reaffirm that we favor the implementation of those understandings of principle, which were reached between us. It is precisely in this vein that I address you.

We do not see any genuinely convincing reasons, why the USSR and US could not make a joint step - to mutually discontinue nuclear explosions. A political decision is required in this case. And we would like to hope that such a decision will be taken by the US Administration.

Sincerely,

M. GORBACHEV