Correspondence

Addressed to President Reagan
From General Secretary Gorbachev

December 5, 1985

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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, 1956. As we have stated, the USSR is ready to
refrain from conducting nuclear explosions even further, though, na-
turally, 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 addi-
tional 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,

**Gorbachev**