QUESTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTS

Letter dated 15 November 1958 from the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General

15 November 1958

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a TASS statement dated 14 November 1958 on the cessation of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests.

I should be glad if you would arrange for this statement to be issued and circulated as an official United Nations document.

(Signed) A. SOBOLEV

Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations
TASS STATEMENT

As a result of improper manoeuvring in the General Assembly by the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, the United Nations was unable to adopt a resolution paving the way for the general cessation of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests for all time. The Governments of these two Western Powers, which are bent on pursuing the arms race, including the race to manufacture atomic and hydrogen weapons, prevented the United Nations from doing its duty.

Although the overwhelming majority of States spoke out clearly in favour of the immediate cessation of these weapons tests for once and for all, when it came to the vote blatant pressure and blackmail by the United States compelled a number of States dependent on that country to vote for the United States and United Kingdom proposal, which was designed to hamstring any agreement on the cessation of atomic weapons tests and to secure the continuance of those tests.

In its statement on 31 October the Soviet Government indicated that, although the Soviet Union had carried out many fewer test explosions of atomic weapons than the United States and the United Kingdom, it was still ready to discontinue the testing of those weapons for all time, if the United States and the United Kingdom did likewise.

The Government of the USSR also stated that if the United States and the United Kingdom continued to hamstring any agreement on the general discontinuance of atomic weapons tests for all time, the Soviet Government would be compelled, in view of the actions of the United States and the United Kingdom, to resume test explosions of atomic and hydrogen weapons and would continue those tests in the proportion of one to one until the number of tests carried out by the Soviet Union after the resumption of testing equalled the total number of test explosions undertaken by both the United States and the United Kingdom after 31 March, i.e. after the date of the unilateral cessation by the Soviet Union of nuclear weapons tests.

Judging from the statements by President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles, and also from the statement on 7 November by Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom, the United States
and United Kingdom Governments intend to continue to put obstacles in the way of an agreement on the cessation of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests.

They are still making the cessation of nuclear weapons tests contingent upon demands which render meaningless their statements that they are ready to discontinue such tests. This is apparent because, firstly, they propose only to suspend these tests for one year, that is to say, for the time necessary to prepare for the next series of tests; secondly, they make the suspension of tests contingent upon the solution of other disarmament problems, although they themselves are making it impossible to solve a single disarmament problem; thirdly, as they have recently held the most intensive series of nuclear tests, they are trying to obtain a decision which would restrain the Soviet Union from conducting nuclear tests and thereby attempting to gain a one-sided advantage for themselves to the detriment of the legitimate security interests of the Soviet Union.

In an attempt to justify their policy in this respect, leading personalities in the United States and the United Kingdom are feigning surprise at the fact that the Soviet Union is continuing nuclear weapons tests. They did not express surprise, however, when the United States and the United Kingdom carried out test explosions of atomic and hydrogen weapons almost every day, and often even several times a day, for many months. They considered this normal and they even gave the widest publicity to these activities of theirs during the whole of the period from 31 March in which the Soviet Union did not undertake a single nuclear weapons test.

Notwithstanding the ruses to which United States leaders resort in connexion with the cessation of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests, they will be as unsuccessful in the future as they have been in the past in concealing the truth. And the truth is that the Governments of these two Powers are disregarding the will of the peoples who call for an end to atomic and hydrogen weapons tests and the immediate cessation of these tests for all time. If the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom were really ready to agree to the cessation of the testing of nuclear weapons, then the Soviet Government would be ready, as before, to sign an immediate agreement with them. In that case, however, the United States and United Kingdom Governments would have to stop resorting to clumsy manoeuvres and state their readiness to take this step.
Control over the cessation of tests is entirely feasible, as was confirmed, despite statements to the contrary by the United States and United Kingdom Governments, at the recently concluded conference of experts at Geneva. But recognition of the possibility of control must be followed up by practical measures, namely, an agreement on the cessation of nuclear tests, and it is clear that the United States and the United Kingdom do not want this, judging from the statements by their leaders referred to above and the position taken by their representatives at the Geneva Conference at present in progress.

It is not long since the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom stated at the Geneva conference of experts that they were not empowered to discuss the major question, that is to say, agreement on the cessation of nuclear weapons tests, and that such an agreement must be the subject of separate talks at a later date.

However, now that a separate conference has been convened to consider this major question - the conclusion of an agreement - it is again being asserted in the Palais des Nations at Geneva that this time, too, the purpose of the meeting is to consider questions of control rather than to conclude an agreement on the cessation of nuclear explosions.

This fact alone indicated the gulf separating the misleading statements of United States and United Kingdom leaders about their readiness to agree to the cessation of nuclear weapons tests and the true position of those countries.

As for the Soviet Union, it has insisted and it will continue to insist on the need to put an end immediately to all nuclear weapons testing for all time, as it is deeply convinced that this demand is in keeping with the aspirations of mankind and that it will serve to reduce international tension and eliminate the threat of an atomic war.