

Last winter we in the United States conducted a most careful review of the situation created by the violent series of Soviet tests of 1961. On the basis of this technical and military assessment, and in full agreement with Prime Minister Macmillan, I reached a clear and firm decision that we must ourselves return to atmospheric testing unless an effective agreement could be reached with the Soviet Union. The judgment was based on the facts as I reviewed them myself; it was supported both here and in the United Kingdom, by the overwhelming weight of qualified technical and military counsel. This is not a judgment based on unreasoned response to provocation. It is a sober and measured assessment of what is needed for our common security.

So far, the Soviet Government has not given the slightest sign that it is willing to accept any form of international verification for a test ban agreement. In refusing such international verification the Soviet Government explains that its concern is with espionage and that unilateral detection systems are adequate to monitor a nuclear test ban agreement. There is no need to explain to you that the United States and United Kingdom draft test ban treaty of last April eighteenth does not support the Soviet espionage allegation in any way. What we are asking is essentially that minimum of inspection which is required on the basis of the best and most up-to-date technical advice. Our position has recently been restudied at Harold Macmillan's urging, and the advice of the US-UK first team of seismologists is unanimous: without verification we cannot know what is happening underground. The Soviet Union itself admits that there are "difficulties" in identifying underground nuclear explosions and thereby also admits that unilateral monitoring systems are not adequate to monitor a test ban agreement.

Recently there has been talk in the Geneva conference about a control system for a nuclear test ban agreement which would free the Soviet Union of any commitment to international verification. May I urge you most earnestly to join with us in opposing any such proposal. There is no safety in it for any of us, and it leads away from the only honest and workable road to arms limitation. I fully understand the sincerity and good will of those who are attracted by such proposals. But in fact they do not serve peace among nations or understanding among men.

What we must do, I deeply believe, is stand together in convincing the Soviet Union that the world cannot have disarmament without inspection and that the Soviet Union cannot conduct nuclear tests with impunity and then expect the United States to hold its hand in matters essential to the security of the West. I hope you will agree with me that Canada and the United States should stand together on this issue of vital importance to our common safety.

Sincerely,

JOHN F. KENNEDY