

that impended over the world. Can't we solve a far simpler question—that of the cessation of experimental explosions of nuclear weapons—in peaceful conditions? I think that we can and must do it. Here lies now our duty before the peoples of not only our countries but of all other countries. Having solved promptly also this question—and there are all the preconditions for that—we shall be able to facilitate working out an agreement on disarmament and with even more confidence proceed with solving other urgent international problems which we and you unfortunately are not short of.

Sincerely,
N. Khrushchov.

Following is the text of a letter dated December 28, 1962 from President Kennedy to Chairman Khrushchov.

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I was very glad to receive your letter of December 19, 1962 setting forth your views on nuclear tests. There appear to be no differences between your views and mine regarding the need for eliminating war in this nuclear age. Perhaps only those who have the responsibility for controlling these weapons fully realize the awful devastation their use would bring.

Having these considerations in mind and with respect to the issue of a test ban, I therefore sincerely hope that the suggestions that you have made in your letter will prove to be helpful in starting us down the road to an agreement. I am encouraged that you are prepared to accept the principle of on-site inspections. These seem to me to be essential, not just because of the concern of our congress, but because they seem to us to go to the heart of a reliable agreement ending nuclear testing.

If we are to have peace between systems with far reaching ideological differences, we must find ways for reducing or removing the recurring waves of fear and suspicion which feed on ignorance, misunderstanding or what appears to one side or the other as broken agreements. To me the element of assurance is vital to the broader development of peaceful relationships.

With respect to the question of on-site inspections I would certainly agree that we could accept any reasonable provision which you had in mind to protect against your concern that the on-site inspectors might engage in "espionage" en route to the area of inspection. In a statement at the United Nations, Ambassador Stevenson suggested that the U.S.A. would accept any reasonable security provision while the inspectors were being taken to the site, so long as they had reasonable provision for satisfying themselves that

they were actually at the intended location and had the freedom necessary to inspect the limited designated area.

With respect to the number of on-site inspections, there appears to have been some misunderstanding. Your impression seems to be that Ambassador Dean told Deputy Minister Kuznetsov that the U.S.A. might be prepared to accept an annual number of on-site inspections between two and four. Ambassador Dean advises me that the only number which he mentioned in his discussions with Deputy Minister Kuznetsov was a number between eight and ten. This represented a substantial decrease in the request of the U.S.A., as we had previously been insisting upon a number between twelve and twenty. I had hoped that the U.S.S.R. would match this motion on the part of the U.S.A. by an equivalent motion in the figure of two or three on-site inspections which it had some time ago indicated it might allow.

I am aware that this matter of on-site inspections has given you considerable difficulty, although I am not sure that I fully understand why this should be so. To me an effective nuclear test ban treaty is of such importance that I would not permit such international arrangements to become mixed up with our or any other national desire to seek other types of information about the U.S.S.R. I believe quite sincerely that arrangements could be worked out which would convince you and your colleagues that this is the case.

But in this connection your implication that on-site inspections should be limited to seismic areas also gives us some difficulty. It is true that in the ordinary course we would have concern about events taking place in the seismic areas. However an unidentified seismic event coming from an area in which there are not usually earthquakes would be a highly suspicious event. The U.S.A. would feel that in such a circumstance the U.S.S.R. would be entitled to an on-site inspection of such an event occurring in our area and feels that the U.S.A. should have the same rights within its annual quota of inspections.

Perhaps your comment would be that a seismic event in another area designated for inspection might coincide with a highly sensitive defense installation. I recognize this as a real problem but believe that some arrangement can be worked out which would prevent this unlikely contingency from erecting an insuperable obstacle.

Your suggestion as to the three locations in the U.S.S.R. in which there might be unmanned seismic stations is helpful, but it does not seem to me to go far enough. These stations are all outside the areas of highest seismicity and therefore do not record all