

An Open Letter to the President of the United States

"How long, O Lord?"

*"Until cities lie waste
without inhabitant,
and houses without men,
and the land is utterly desolate."
Isaiah 6:11*

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

Today by his own action man is in danger of fulfilling the ancient prophecy of Isaiah. Will we, tomorrow, like modern Samson, bring down the temple of man?

The Russian resumption of nuclear weapons testing and the American intent to do so are utterly tragic. To claim that thus peace will be protected and mankind benefited is to seek moral justification where it cannot be found. We cannot obtain peace by perfecting the means of doom.

Further testing can have one purpose only—to achieve a preponderance of military power. The Russian Government's sober claim that it fully appreciates the significance of this step is grossly presumptuous. No man or nation anywhere on earth is able to comprehend the dimensions of the tragedy which would flow from the use of weapons now being tested. Is it conceivable that those who survived would find well-being and security amid the rubble of material chaos and moral desolation?

The fact is that, in East and West alike, men are trying to run a new kind of world with the attitudes and concepts of a world that is dead. The race for military supremacy is a denial of spiritual value and an affront to God. Mankind longs for leadership which will break through in mind and spirit to a world order in which practical policies will not outrage but will find their strength in the great truths of religious faith.

The United States has not yet actually set off an explosion. There is still time to announce an indefinite postponement. There is still time for you, as President of the United States, to announce that the entire issue of testing will be submitted to the conscience of mankind in the only forum available for its expression, the General Assembly of the United Nations. There is still time to pledge that the United States will abide by the result.

The Soviet decision has dramatized a moment of opportunity for a new level of world leadership. That moment ends when we test our first bomb.

Yours sincerely,

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This letter is published by the American Friends Service Committee to share publicly its deep concern for world peace. Inquiries, or expressions of interest, support, or concern are invited.