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THE PRIME MINISTER

6 September 1985

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. 7159/85

John D. Constantine

I am writing to thank you for your message of 26 August which was delivered through your Embassy here last week.

I recognise the force of the arguments which you advance for your decision to announce a moratorium in your nuclear testing programme until the end of this year. Indeed I found the further elaboration in your letter on your detailed public statement of last July very helpful. I hope that you for your part will accept that the reservations expressed earlier by my Government are genuine and are based on an honest difference of assessment of the likelihood that your proposal will lead to progress in this important area. I assure you however that I shall continue to study these issues in the light of what you have said.

You also referred to a resumption of the previous negotiations on a Comprehensive Test Ban, which were suspended in 1980. I certainly agree that a properly verified Treaty of this nature which met the security interests of all parties would be a significant contribution to containing the proliferation of nuclear arms. None the less, as you yourself mention, we continue to face substantive difficulties in achieving the necessary degree of verification, difficulties which we outlined in detail in a paper tabled in July at the Conference on Disarmament. While my Government remains fully committed to seeking

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progress towards a Comprehensive Test Ban, we believe that these difficulties cannot be lightly brushed aside. My view at present, therefore, is that a resumption of the negotiations to which you referred would be premature; but we shall continue to lend our best efforts towards the search for solutions to the difficulties which we have both identified.

I hope that at our meeting here last December and in subsequent discussion, to which I attach great importance, I left you in no doubt about the sincerity of my own commitment and that of my Government to achieving progress in the vital field of arms control. I therefore welcome this opportunity to continue the dialogue between us on these subjects, and for my part would be most glad to engage in further exchanges on arms control questions. I was pleased, in particular, to learn of the contacts between our officials in July on chemical weapons, where I trust we can find some new common ground which will enable negotiations to move ahead.

In conclusion I would like to underline my hope that the current negotiations you are conducting with the United States in Geneva and your meeting with President Reagan in November will produce the sort of substantive progress which we are all anxious to see.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Mr. M.S. Gorbachev.