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REGULATION, LIMITATION AND BALANCED REDUCTION OF ALL  
ARMED FORCES AND ALL ARMAMENTS; CONCLUSION OF AN  
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION (TREATY) ON THE REDUCTION  
OF ARMAMENTS AND THE PROHIBITION OF ATOMIC, HYDROGEN  
AND OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Letter dated 17 November 1956 from the Secretary-General of  
the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to  
the eleventh session of the General Assembly, addressed to the  
President of the General Assembly

New York, 17 November 1956

Sir,

I enclose herewith a Statement by the Soviet Government on disarmament and the lessening of international tension.

I would ask you to have this Statement distributed as a document of the eleventh session of the General Assembly.

I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) S. KOZYREV  
Secretary-General of the  
delegation of the USSR to the  
eleventh session of the  
General Assembly

Prince Wan WAITHAYAKON  
President of the eleventh  
session of the General Assembly

STATEMENT BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT ON DISARMAMENT AND  
THE LESSENING OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION

The armed attack on Egypt by the United Kingdom, France and Israel has created a situation dangerous to peace and has confronted the nations with the question of the threat of a third world war in all its acuteness.

It is common knowledge that the above-mentioned countries have taken large-scale measures to mobilize land, sea and air forces, to call up reservists and to mobilize industry, transport and communication lines to meet military needs. These countries have thus virtually been placed on a war footing, particularly if account is taken of the fact that frenzied war propoganda has been developed in the countries of the North Atlantic bloc (NATO) as a whole. The aggressive actions of the United Kingdom, France and Israel against Egypt, the military measures taken by them and the atmosphere of war hysteria have created a real danger that the conflict may spread, involving the use of the latest destructive weapons evolved by military technology.

The unprovoked aggression against Egypt has naturally stirred the peoples of the East; they have risen to the defence of Egypt - which is fighting for its vital national interests, for independent national existence - and hence also to the defence of their own national independence.

As a result of the Egyptian people's heroic resistance and in the face of growing indignation throughout the world at the military gamble in the Middle East, which was condemned by the United Nations, the organizers of the aggressive war were compelled to cease hostilities against Egypt. Nevertheless, it cannot be considered that the danger of war has been removed, that the flames of war may not be rekindled with even greater force. The nations have grounds for caution in view of the fact that the United Kingdom and France are at present concentrating armed forces and military equipment in Cyprus, and also at Port Said, which was occupied by Anglo-French forces even after the declaration by the United Kingdom and France concerning a cease-fire and consequently in violation of the obligations they had assumed before the whole world.

For the purpose of carrying out their war plans in the Middle East, the United Kingdom and France have transferred large military formations, including formations which had been stationed in the territory of West Germany, to the area of hostilities. In addition, the French Government has transferred a considerable part of its army to North Africa in order to crush the national liberation movement in Algeria.

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As a result of the hostilities against Egypt, the Suez Canal has been put out of action for a considerable time, oil pipelines passing through the territory of Arab countries have been destroyed and the communications of the United Kingdom, France and other European countries have been seriously disrupted, communications which are of vital importance to them, particularly in view of the fact that all this has led to the discontinuation of the shipment of oil to Europe through the Mediterranean. Serious difficulties have thereby been created for the United Kingdom, France and other West European countries in obtaining liquid fuel, so necessary for the industry of these countries and of decisive military importance, since in modern conditions without liquid fuel, military equipment is immobilized and armies cannot fight.

Thus, the military gamble against Egypt has resulted in a serious weakening not only of the political but also of the military and strategic positions of the United Kingdom and France in Europe, in a serious weakening of all the military forces of the North Atlantic bloc on the European continent. It is not fortuitous that official circles and the press of the Western Powers note with concern that a highly critical situation has arisen for the organizers of the aggression against Egypt in view of the fact that their main armed forces are concentrated in the area of the Near East and North Africa, while their forces in Europe have been left without sufficiently assured supplies.

It is noteworthy that those circles in the Western Powers, which are responsible for the aggression against Egypt, are now attempting by means of fabrications about the aggressive intentions of the Soviet Union in the Near East and in Europe both to divert attention from the naked aggression committed against Egypt and to cover up the failure that attended this gamble.

Attempts are being made to whip up a slanderous campaign against the Soviet Union in connexion with the failure of the counter-revolutionary military plot against Hungary which, as has now become absolutely clear, was an integral part of the general plot of the imperialists against peace and the security of the peoples both in the Near East and in Europe. Fabrications of every kind are being circulated concerning the alleged concentration of Soviet forces in different countries of Eastern Europe, unusual movements of Soviet troops on the western and southern frontiers of the U.S.S.R., etc.

In the past year alone the Soviet Union unilaterally effected a major reduction of 1,840,000 men in its armed forces, cut its military budget by 10,000,000 rubles and dismantled its military bases in Port Arthur and Porkkala Udd. It is not conducting, as the false propaganda of the Western Powers is trying to assert, any mobilizations or movements of its troops at the frontiers. Its troops are engaged on their service duties and are located at their usual bases. The Soviet people is engaged in peaceful constructive work on the vast expanses of virgin lands, newly brought under cultivation on the huge construction projects of the sixth Five-Year Plan, in laboratories and scientific institutes, in various spheres of culture, art and science.

The Soviet Government declares that the Soviet Union has always been and still is opposed to resolving disputes and differences between States by means of war. It has always been guided and is now guided by the Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence of States, regardless of differences in their social and political systems. In its relations with other States; the Soviet Government is guided by the decisions of the historic twentieth congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union, which openly expressed before the whole world the negative attitude of the U.S.S.R. to war as a means of resolving international disputes and outlined its clear-cut position on the principles of peaceful coexistence of Socialist countries with capitalist countries.

The Soviet State has adhered and will continue firmly to adhere to this position of principle, because it follows from the very nature of the Socialist State, the main aim of which is to raise the standard of living of its people and develop the productive forces of society - free of the fetters of capitalist production relations. This can be assured not in conditions of war but in conditions of peaceful development, which make it possible to utilize the inexhaustible potentialities for the progress of Socialist economy, culture and science.

The Soviet Union has no social groups and classes which would make profits from war and a war boom and which would have any interest in an armaments race, the seizure of foreign territories or in the unleashing of aggressive wars.

It is a well-known fact that Russia has been converted in a brief period of history from a backward agrarian land into a mighty industrial State

for their children, a tranquil and secure future. The peoples of the underdeveloped countries wish to have done with age-old backwardness, with poverty, with the grim legacy of colonial oppression.

The latest developments in the Middle East have graphically shown how great are the forces which are interested in preservation of peace and are fully resolved to curb the aggressors. At the same time, these events have demonstrated that the aggressive circles in certain Powers, for the sake of their narrow selfish interests, are ready to plunge the world into the abyss of another world war, confronting the peoples with the threat of fresh military conflicts fraught with grave consequences for mankind.

That is why at this crucial moment the Soviet Union once again raises its voice for the discontinuation of the arms race, for the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons, for the prohibition of tests of these weapons.

With a view to the practical and speediest possible realization of these demands, which are of vital concern to all nations, the Soviet Government proposes:

(1) That, within two years, the armed forces of the Soviet Union, the United States of America and China should be reduced to 1,000,000-1,500,000 men for each State, the armed forces of the United Kingdom and France to 650,000 men for each State, and those of each of the other States, to 150,000-200,000 men.

As a first step in this direction, the armed forces of the Soviet Union, the United States and China should be reduced to 2,500,000 men and the armed forces of the United Kingdom and France, to 750,000 men for each of these States, during the first year.

The above countries should reduce their armaments accordingly.

(2) That, within the period specified above, the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons should be effected together with the cessation of the production of nuclear weapons, the prohibition of their use, the complete destruction of stockpiles of these weapons and their removal from the armaments of States.

As a first step, tests of atomic and hydrogen weapons should be discontinued forthwith.

(3) That the armed forces of the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France stationed in the territory of Germany should be reduced by one-third during 1957, with the establishment of the appropriate control over this reduction.

(4) That a considerable reduction in the armed forces of the United States, the United Kingdom and France stationed in the territory of the countries participating in NATO should be effected during 1957, and of the armed forces of the Soviet Union stationed in the territory of the Warsaw Treaty countries.

(5) That foreign military, naval and air bases in the territory of other States should be liquidated within two years.

(6) That the military expenditures of States should be reduced in the course of two years in conformity with the reduction of armed forces and armaments, the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons and the liquidation of foreign military bases in the territory of other States.

(7) That, for supervision of the fulfilment of the disarmament obligations assumed by States, strict and effective international control should be established, with all the rights and functions necessary for these purposes.

In order to prevent a surprise attack upon one State by another, control posts should be set up on a basis of reciprocity at large ports, railway junctions, motor highways and airfields, which will see to it that no dangerous concentration of armed forces and armaments occurs.

The Soviet Government has already repeatedly expressed its attitude towards the so-called aerial photography plan and stated that this proposal solves neither the problem of disarmament control nor that of preventing aggression.

Having regard, however, to the fact that the proposal on aerial photography is put forward as a condition for the conclusion of an agreement on disarmament, a circumstance which seriously impedes the achievement of such an agreement, the Soviet Government, with a view to facilitating the earliest possible attainment of agreement, is prepared to consider the question of employing aerial photography within the area of Europe in which the principal armed forces of the North Atlantic bloc and of the Warsaw Treaty countries are stationed, to a depth of 800 kilometres east and west of the demarcation line between the aforementioned armed forces, provided that the States concerned give their consent.

In proposing the carrying out of the above measures, the Soviet Government believes that, once they have been implemented, the question should be raised of the complete liquidation of armed forces and armaments of all types, States

retaining only such contingents of militia (police) as are necessary to maintain internal security and protect their frontiers.

The Soviet Government, faithful to its policy of ensuring peace and desiring to give peoples the confidence that arms will never be used for the settlement of disputes between States, once more proposes the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the countries of the North Atlantic Alliance and the countries participating in the Warsaw Treaty. Such a pact, considering that the participants would include the Soviet Union and the United States - that is countries which possess the most powerful armed forces - would result in radical changes in the entire international climate and would help to lessen international tension and to create confidence between States.

Inasmuch as the consideration of disarmament questions in United Nations bodies has not made it possible so far to attain any practical results in the solution of the problem of the reduction of armaments and the prohibition of atomic weapons, the Soviet Government believes that along with the continuation of efforts in this direction within the United Nations it is necessary to seek more effective ways for the solution of this problem. Considering that the present international situation imperatively calls for immediate measures to prevent war and terminate the armaments race, the Soviet Government believes that it would be expedient to convene a conference of the Heads of Government of the Soviet Union, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France and India, as proposed by the President of the Swiss Confederation. Such a conference could facilitate the reaching of agreements on questions related to the problem of disarmament. The success of the conference of the five Heads of Government could pave the way for a broader conference on these questions, in which the Heads of Government of all States parties to NATO and the Warsaw Treaty could take part. The Soviet Government considers it desirable that such a conference should also be attended by the Heads of Government of a number of other countries, and especially the People's Republic of China, India, Yugoslavia, Indonesia and Burma, which are not parties either to the Warsaw Treaty or to such military groupings as NATO, SEATO and the Baghdad pact.

Should there be any difficulties in the convocation of the conference of the Heads of Government of the five Powers, it is the view of the Soviet Government