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QUESTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTS

Letter dated 29 April 1959 from the Permanent Representative of the
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the
United Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General

New York, 29 April 1959

I have the honour to transmit the text of a letter from the Right Honourable Harold Macmillan, M.P., Prime Minister, to Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for it to be circulated for the information of all Members of the United Nations.

(Signed) Pierson DIXON

13 April 1959

Dear Mr. Chairman,

The resumption of the Geneva negotiations for the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests prompts me to write to you about the future work of the conference. This is a subject to which I have given most serious reflection since our conversations in Moscow, and which I have discussed at length with President Eisenhower.

I hope that in the course of my visit I convinced you of the real desire of Her Majesty's Government to achieve an enduring agreement for the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests, under effective international control, which would safeguard the interests of all parties. I can assure you again that Her Majesty's Government attach the greatest importance to achieving an agreement of this kind, both for its own value and as a step which could pave the way towards agreement on measures of real disarmament.

President Eisenhower has shown me a message to you which is being delivered today. In it he proposes two alternative methods by which he believes we might reach agreement at Geneva. One method would lead to a comprehensive and permanent discontinuance of all nuclear tests. The other would lead us to a less comprehensive initial agreement, but would hold out hope of early progress to wider agreement. I should like you to know that I fully support the President's proposals and commend them warmly to your consideration. If you do not yet feel able to move to a position which would make a comprehensive discontinuance of tests possible, can we not at least register the valuable progress already made at Geneva by proceeding now to an agreement of a more limited kind, on which we could improve later and, indeed, I should hope, before too long?

The British and American delegations will be making proposals in this sense at Geneva today.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) Harold MACMILLAN
