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LETTER DATED 19 JULY 1960 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY TO
THE UNITED NATIONS, ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

New York, 19 July 1960

I have the honour to enclose the text of a message dated 15 July 1960, from the Prime Minister of Italy, the Hon. Fernando Tambroni, to Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR concerning the question of disarmament. In this message the Prime Minister deplores the unilateral breaking of negotiations in the Ten Nation Committee on disarmament and expresses the hope that the Soviet Government will reconsider its decision and resume these negotiations on disarmament in the Ten Nation Committee.

I should be grateful if this letter and its enclosure could be circulated to all Members of the United Nations as a document of the General Assembly and of the Disarmament Commission.

(Signed) E. ORTONA
Permanent Representative of Italy
to the United Nations

Message dated 15 July from the Prime Minister, the Hon. Fernando Tambroni, to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, Mr. N.S. Khrushchev

Dear Mr. Chairman,

With reference to your letter, which was handed to me by Ambassador Kozijrev, I wish first of all to emphasize that the considerations and the criticisms developed by you in respect of the action of the Italian Government and its Delegation to the Disarmament Conference have no foundation whatsoever. Nothing can justify the allegation that Italy has shown a lack of will to reach an agreement on the vital and complex problem of disarmament. Similarly the contention that the Italian Delegation indulged in sterile argumentations and especially that it advocated "the necessity of maintaining the present high level of armaments, inviting to maintain bases on territory of other States" is not in keeping with reality.

Instead, the facts are that the Italian Delegate in Geneva has consistently emphasized the need for a gradual reduction of the levels of troops and conventional weapons, in balance with a parallel atomic disarmament. In so far as bases are concerned, the Italian Delegate could not but point out that, whilst Soviet proposals specifically provided for the principle that no State should derive military advantages from the disarmament process, the priority in the elimination of bases envisaged by such proposals would have caused, in the first phase of disarmament, a serious upheaval in the present balance of forces in Europe. Nor could such a situation of unbalance be remedied by a Soviet declaration of intention to proceed, after the dismantling of the bases, to conventional disarmament.

Far from "submerging the cause of disarmament in sterile and never ending discussions on the theme of control without disarmament", it has been and it is the constant intention of Italy that disarmament and control should advance at the same pace and in conjunction. And the Italian Delegate has indeed insisted in Geneva on the need of creating a system of disarmament in which control - exercised through an international organization - should ensure progressively the full implementation of the measures decided upon. What was stated in the final communique following the visit of the President of the Italian Republic

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in the USSR, to which you refer, still remains the honest and firm position of the Italian Government. I can, and must, assure you that the action of the Italian Delegation in Geneva has been based on the only purpose of exploring every possibility of agreement, which could positively emerge also from the same last Soviet proposals. Through an objective examination of the records of the meetings, you will easily satisfy yourself of the absolute soundness of this statement of ours.

In this respect I should like to refer to what I wrote in my letter to you of June 7, 1960, with regard to the constructive manner in which the Italian Government viewed the development of the negotiation. I draw your attention to it because this has found confirmation in the fact that the Italian Delegate has had occasion later to point out the various points in which the recent proposals of the Delegation of the USSR offered greater possibilities for the development of negotiations.

The gesture of the Soviet Representative at the Conference of the Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament in Geneva is therefore to be deplored, especially at a time when he knew that the Western Delegations were about to present new proposals. I express the hope that the decision which has determined such a gesture will not be irrevocable. I prefer to believe that you are as determined as I am, to seek satisfactory agreements on the problem of disarmament which is of such a vital importance to all humanity.

The Soviet decision to interrupt conversations in Geneva takes on unilateral aspects which cannot be reconciled with the obligations which your Government had undertaken last September. The decision of convening the Ten Nation Committee was taken by the four Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, of the United States, of the United Kingdom and of France in September last year and such a decision cannot be voided by a unilateral action on the part of the Soviet Union: to be valid such an act must be made through an agreement by the four Powers together.

As the Soviet Delegation did not attend the meeting of 28 June, I regret to be led to the conclusion that your Government does not show the necessary interest in seeking - within the Ten Nation Committee - a concrete method to attain the objective which you declare to pursue and which we honestly hope to reach.

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The importance of the problem of disarmament is at any rate such that - if it is not intended to delude the universal expectations - no delay should be interposed in approaching it again with the utmost good will. Therefore I strongly hope that you will agree to a proposal for a prompt resumption of the work of the Ten Nation Committee.

While I wait to be informed of your thoughts on the matter, I beg of you to accept, Mr. Chairman, the expressions of my highest consideration.

F. Tambroni
