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LETTER DATED 8 AUGUST 1960 FROM THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

New York, 8 August 1960

Further to my letter No. 330 of 1 August 1960, I request you to issue as official documents of the General Assembly and the United Nations Disarmament Commission the text, attached hereto, of a note dated 2 August 1960 from the Soviet Government to the Government of Italy on the question of disarmament.

(Signed) P. MOROZOV,
Deputy Permanent Representative of the USSR
to the United Nations

NOTE FROM THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO THE
GOVERNMENT OF ITALY

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics presents its compliments to the Embassy of the Italian Republic and has the honour to make the following statement.

The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has received a letter from the Italian Government, dated 15 July 1960, in reply to the message dated 27 June from Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, on the question of disarmament. It is compelled to note that this letter to all intents and purposes evades the serious question, raised by the Head of the Soviet Government, of the alarming situation brought about by the attitude of the Western Powers, including Italy, with regard to the cause of disarmament. In defiance of the obvious facts, the Italian Government is attempting to justify the policy followed by the five States members of NATO, a policy which is dooming the negotiations in the Ten-Nation Committee to futility and collapse.

There is no need to dwell once more on the details of the negotiations in the Committee, in the course of which the Soviet Union and the other socialist States did everything in their power to direct its work towards the preparation of a specific agreement on disarmament in accordance with the General Assembly resolution of 20 November 1959 on general and complete disarmament.

The best testimony to the objectives pursued by the Soviet Government in the Ten-Nation Committee's negotiations is to be found in the specific, detailed and practical proposals of 18 September 1959 and 2 June 1960 which it submitted for the Committee's consideration. It may be added that in the proposals put forward on 2 June 1960, the Soviet Government, as is well known, went a considerable way to meet the ideas advanced by France and the other Western Powers concerning such important aspects of the disarmament programme as the priority to be assigned to the prohibition and destruction of all means of delivering nuclear weapons, the method of organization of international control over disarmament measures, measures to ensure international peace in conditions of general and complete disarmament, etc.

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The Soviet Government had every reason to expect that this new major effort on its part to meet the views of the Western Powers would enable the Ten-Nation Committee at long last to fulfil its primary task - the preparation of a specific agreement on disarmament.

That, however, was not what happened. The Government of Italy and its allies in the NATO military bloc once again evaded any business-like discussion of the Soviet Union's proposals, and tried their best to turn the disarmament negotiations into negotiations on control without disarmament, i.e. on some system of legalized espionage which could only increase tension in the relations between States and further intensify the armaments race. The Italian representative, indeed, was particularly active in this connexion, calling for the establishment within the Committee of a special working group to study the "principles of control".

At the same time, Italy not only showed no desire to facilitate agreement on any specific disarmament measures, but, on the contrary, tried and is still trying to prevent such agreement, not hesitating to distort grossly the meaning of the disarmament proposals put forward by the Soviet Union. This is done, for example, in the letter from the Head of the Italian Government dated 15 July. In this letter it is asserted that to put into effect the USSR proposal for the elimination of military bases established by States on foreign territory would cause "a serious upheaval in the present balance of forces in Europe" and would give one side "military advantages" at the expense of the other.

It will readily be seen that such an interpretation is completely at variance with the facts. The Soviet Union's proposals of 2 June 1960 provide at the very first stage of disarmament for the elimination of foreign military bases together with the prohibition and destruction of all means of delivering nuclear weapons, in the very first stage of disarmament as the reliable way to remove, even while nuclear weapons themselves still exist, the danger of a nuclear war being launched against any country. It is perfectly obvious that to destroy such means of delivering nuclear weapons as intercontinental rockets while the United States still maintained a network of military bases near the borders of the USSR and other peaceful States of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America would be to give the United States one-sided military advantages over other countries such as the Pentagon can at the present time only dream of.

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It is possible that that would in fact suit the Government of Italy, which has provided Italian territory for use as American military bases; but for those who wish disarmament to be achieved at long last, giving all States an equal measure of security, the Italian Government's position on the question of foreign bases must, of course, be unacceptable.

The Italian Government's objections to the elimination of military bases on foreign territory as a first step on the ground that this would allegedly cause an "upheaval in the balance of forces in Europe" are the more unconvincing in that the Italian Government and its Western partners, as is known, likewise withheld their support from the programme put before the United Nations by the Soviet Union in September 1959, in which it was proposed to initiate disarmament with an agreed reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons, the destruction of nuclear and rocket weapons and the application of other disarmament measures being left to subsequent stages. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the Government of Italy and its allies do not fear the alleged undesirable consequences of one or another disarmament time-table, but fear and wish to evade disarmament itself.

Although throughout the protracted proceedings of the Ten-Nation Committee it submitted not a single specific proposal on disarmament, the Government of Italy, following the lead of its NATO partners, is now trying to shift the responsibility for the breakdown of the negotiations in that Committee to the Soviet Union, and is presuming to assert that the Soviet Government "does not show the necessary interest" in the attainment of the goals of disarmament. The USSR Government categorically rejects such assertions, which are a complete travesty of the facts.

While the Soviet Union is doing everything it can to create favourable conditions for the success of disarmament negotiations, submitting specific proposals on the subject and unilaterally putting into effect a substantial reduction in its armed forces, the Government of Italy, together with the Governments of the United States and the other Western Powers, is stubbornly deflecting the negotiations into a course which has nothing to do with genuine disarmament, and is playing not the least significant role in the military preparations for a nuclear-rocket war which are being carried out by the NATO bloc under the leadership of the United States, with the active participation of the revanchist and militaristic forces of West Germany.

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It is quite obvious that with the Western Powers adopting such a position the work of the Ten-Nation Committee not only ceased to serve any useful purpose but actually began to do harm by engendering in people the illusion that something was being done in the sphere of disarmament whereas in reality the negotiations in the Committee were being used by the NATO Powers simply as a means of deceiving the peoples, as a cover for intensifying the arms race. To pretend in such circumstances that everything was normal would have been to mislead the peoples and compromise the very idea of disarmament. That was why the Soviet Government, supported by the Governments of the other socialist States represented in the Ten-Nation Committee, felt it necessary to suspend its participation in the work of the Ten-Nation Committee and put before the United Nations General Assembly the question of disarmament and the unsatisfactory situation with regard to the fulfilment of its resolution of 20 November 1959 on that question.

The Italian Government's letter speaks of "new proposals" which the Western delegations were about to present in the Ten-Nation Committee. This is apparently a reference to the document published by the United States representative on behalf of his country on 27 June, after the proceedings of the Ten-Nation Committee had been suspended. Perusal of that document shows that the "new" proposals which it sets forth are nothing but a slightly modified version of the Western Powers' earlier plan submitted to the Ten-Nation Committee on 16 March. These, then, are proposals whose inadequacy had been demonstrated at the earliest stage of the Committee's work. Their manifest unacceptability was, of course, entirely apparent to those who, for purely propagandist purposes, thought that they could once again drag out this screen, with some minor external embellishments, and use it, obviously, to conceal the true policy of the present Government of the United States, aimed at aggravating the international situation and intensifying the armaments race.

As in the Western Powers' proposals of 16 March, in the United States document of 27 June all attention is concentrated, from the very first stage on the institution of broad measures of control without disarmament; and to all intents and purposes, the entire process is reduced to this first stage. While it proposes no reduction of armed forces during this stage, the United States seeks at the same time to place under foreign control all the armed forces and armaments of the USSR and other States. This, therefore is plainly an attempt to

institute the collection of espionage information under the guise of "international control" - something which no State concerned with its security can accept.

Instead of any real reduction and elimination of armaments, the United States proposes that States should place in storage depots within their own territories specified quantities of armaments under supervision by international inspectors. But it is clear that a State which wanted to use these weapons for aggressive purposes could at any time remove the inspectors, take the weapons out of storage and put them to use.

The "new" United States proposals are completely silent on the question of eliminating military bases maintained by States on foreign territory. Similarly, it would be vain to try to find in them any provision for eliminating the means of delivering nuclear weapons and prohibiting these weapons themselves; such measures are not envisaged in the United States plan. In these circumstances, no practical significance for a solution of the problem of prohibiting nuclear weapons can be attached to the United States proposal to stop the production of fissionable materials for military purposes. It is well known that the stocks of atomic and hydrogen bombs already accumulated are sufficient to destroy whole States. To stop the production of fissionable materials would do nothing to remove the threat that an aggressor might set off an atomic war - especially when the nuclear weapons and nuclear materials already produced could easily be hidden even if an attempt were made to discover them.

As to the disarmament measures envisaged for the second and third stages of the disarmament programme, the United States plan is so drafted that these measures will never be carried out, since no specific time-limits are laid down for their implementation, and the transition from the first to the second and third stages of disarmament is made contingent upon the fulfilment of various additional conditions, a situation which would simply give the opponents of disarmament grounds for spinning out the implementation of the disarmament programme indefinitely.

It is quite clear from the foregoing that these so-called "new" United States proposals to which the Government of Italy refers add nothing new to the position of the Western Powers on the question of disarmament. They in no way pursue the goal of real disarmament, but serve only to deceive public opinion. Such proposals obviously could not afford a basis for negotiations or make for success in the work of the Ten-Nation Committee.

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All this emphasizes once more the desirability of drawing the attention of the entire world to the situation which has arisen with regard to the question of disarmament, and of discussing the question again in that same forum in which, on 20 November 1959, the resolution on general and complete disarmament was unanimously adopted by the States Members of the United Nations.

The Soviet Government is still warmly in favour of disarmament negotiations, but it wishes them to be honest, business-like negotiations, leading to practical disarmament measures, and not a deceptive pretence. It still considers that parity of representation is calculated to create favourable conditions for examination of the disarmament question. However, in view of the experience gained in the work of the Ten-Nation Committee, the question arises whether some other countries, in addition to those already represented in the Committee, should not be brought into the negotiations.

The Soviet Government is firmly convinced that the problem of disarmament, on which the destiny of all mankind depends, must and can be solved. It hopes that this aim will be furthered by the forthcoming discussion of this question at the fifteenth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

It stands to reason that if we are to advance at long last, in the sphere of disarmament, from words to the concrete deeds which all the peoples are impatiently awaiting, it will be essential for the Western Powers, including Italy, to review their attitude towards the solution of this problem, to give up the policy of intensifying the armaments race and to embark on the course of serious negotiations on disarmament questions.

Moscow, 2 August 1960
