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DISARMAMENT AND THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE FULFILMENT OF  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1378 (XIV) OF 20 NOVEMBER 1959 ON  
THE QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 8 February 1961 from the Chairman of the Council of  
Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics addressed to  
the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, New York

(Circulated at the request of the Permanent Representative of the  
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations)

Dear Mr. Cousins and Mr. Pickett,

I have carefully studied your Committee's appeal, which was sent to me, as well as to Mr. Macmillan, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; Mr. Kennedy, the newly elected President of the United States of America; and Mr. de Gaulle, the President of France.

We quite understand your anxiety over the ever-increasing danger from the continuing arms race and over the ever-greater risk of accidental war as the number of countries possessing nuclear weapons increases. I have more than once had occasion to point out that the Soviet Government is deeply convinced of the need to put an end as soon as possible to the dangerous and utterly wasteful armaments race, and the Soviet Union will therefore bend every effort, as it is already doing, to achieve a solution of the problem of disarmament and of other urgent international problems. We are sincerely striving to make 1961 a year of success for the cause of peace and tranquillity on our planet.

In your Committee's appeal, mention is made of various things that could be done in 1961, nearly all of which are connected with disarmament questions. We, too, believe that the problem of disarmament is the most important, indeed, the cardinal problem which the world faces today.

As you know, the United Nations General Assembly at its fifteenth session between September and December 1960 examined the question of general and complete disarmament. During the session, the Soviet Government introduced new proposals, in which it moved closer to the Western Powers on quite a number of points. Among other things, these proposals contained detailed provisions on the control necessary to ensure the effective implementation of a treaty on general and complete disarmament.

At the fifteenth session of the General Assembly, I declared on behalf of the Government of the Soviet Union that if the Western countries accepted our proposals on disarmament, we would accept without reservation the other side's proposal on disarmament control. I am now repeating that declaration in this letter. The Soviet Government stands for the widest measure of control if agreement is reached on disarmament.

During the General Assembly session, India and some other countries made an effort to secure agreement on directives for further negotiations on disarmament. The Soviet Union considered it possible to support the twelve-Power draft resolution on directives regarding general and complete disarmament although we felt that it was not sufficiently clear or precise in several places and that it lacked certain essential provisions. On the other hand, the representative of the former United States Administration came out against this draft resolution, thereby putting himself in the position of opposing all the peace-loving forces which advocate the earliest possible solution to the problem of general and complete disarmament.

We should like to hope that at the second part of the fifteenth session of the General Assembly the Western Powers will change their negative attitude and thereby make possible a renewal of constructive negotiations on general and complete disarmament. The Soviet Government and I, as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, are prepared to do everything possible to facilitate agreement on this great problem.

Some of the measures referred to in your Committee's appeal concern the question of the cessation of nuclear weapons tests. We have always given considerable attention to this question, although, as is obvious, the cessation of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests would not, alone and of itself, solve the problem

of eliminating the danger of nuclear war and ending the armaments race. The only real and direct path to that objective is general and complete disarmament. The Soviet Union has patiently and persistently worked for agreement at the three-Power Geneva Conference, which has now been going on for more than two years. In spite of our making a number of important concessions to the United States and the United Kingdom, in spite of our accepting many of the proposals put forward by our fellow-negotiators at Geneva, no agreement on the cessation of nuclear weapons tests has so far been reached. In particular, there has been no settlement of the question of a moratorium on small underground nuclear tests or of a research programme for improving methods of detecting such tests, to which reference is made in your Committee's appeal.

When the Geneva Conference is resumed, the Soviet Union will, as before, do all in its power to reach agreement on the cessation of all tests of nuclear weapons of all sizes for all time.

I hope that the work of your Committee for strengthening world peace will be productive of real results and help to solve international problems which have become urgent, including, first and foremost, the problem of disarmament.

I can assure you that in 1961 the Soviet Government will continue to wage a tireless struggle for lasting peace on earth.

Respectfully yours,

N. KHRUSHCHEV

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