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LETTER DATED 7 DECEMBER 1964 FROM THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Upon the instructions of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the delegation of the Soviet Union hereby submits for consideration by the General Assembly of the United Nations at its nineteenth session a memorandum by the Soviet Government on measures for the further reduction of international tension and limitation of the arms race.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this memorandum to be circulated as a General Assembly document.

(Signed) A. GROMYKO
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the USSR

MEMORANDUM BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT ON MEASURES FOR THE
FURTHER REDUCTION OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION AND LIMITATION
OF THE ARMS RACE

It has recently been possible, as a result of the active and persistent struggle carried on by peace-loving States and peoples, to take a number of practical measures to lessen international tension and limit to some extent the scope of the nuclear arms race - to conclude the Moscow Treaty banning nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and underwater, to agree not to launch nuclear weapons into orbit, to begin cutting down the production of fissionable material for military purposes in the USSR, the United States and the United Kingdom and to make a reduction in the 1964 military budgets of the USSR, the United States and a number of other States.

The Soviet Government, being guided in its foreign policy by the principles of peaceful coexistence, is convinced that for the sake of strengthening peace it is essential to move steadily forward in the direction of an improvement in international relations. The first steps should be followed by further agreements limiting the arms race more and more strictly, extending the area of international trust and thus clearing the way for the conclusion of an agreement on the fundamental question, namely, general and complete disarmament.

The Soviet Government proposes that agreement should be reached to implement the following measures in the very near future, which would carry States forward a further stage in the struggle for a lasting and inviolable peace.

1. Reduction of Military Budgets

The continuing arms race absorbs vast sums of money and imposes a heavy burden on the peoples of the world.

The Soviet Government has repeatedly proposed that States should reduce their military budgets, pointing out that this measure would not only lessen the chance of an expansion of the arms race, but would release considerable resources for developing the peaceful branches of countries' economies and raising standards of living. Having set an example by unilaterally reducing its 1964 military budget by 600 million roubles, the Soviet Union proposes to the other big military Powers an agreement to reduce military budgets by 10-15 per cent or some other agreed amount.

The Soviet Government, constantly following a policy of giving every possible support to the developing countries which are faced with important tasks in strengthening their economies, is favourable towards the idea of using part of the funds saved as a result of the reduction in military budgets for aid to the developing countries. The Soviet Government declares itself ready, if agreement is reached on a reduction in States' military budgets of 10-15 per cent, to make provision for part of the resources saved in this way to be used for aid to the developing countries.

The Soviet Government also considers it possible to make progress in the reduction of the big Powers' military budgets on a basis of mutual example.

2. Withdrawal or cut-back of foreign troops stationed in alien territories

The normalization of international relations is materially impeded by the presence of foreign troops in the territory of other States. The concentration in Central Europe of large numbers of foreign troops and weapons constitutes a serious obstacle to an improvement in the relations between the States belonging, on the one hand, to the North Atlantic Alliance and, on the other, to the Warsaw Treaty. The presence of foreign troops in the territory of other States and elsewhere gives rise to serious complications.

The Soviet Government considers that the best solution, one conducive to an improvement in international relations, would be the conclusion of an agreement on the withdrawal of all foreign troops within their national frontiers, and the Soviet Union is ready for such a settlement of this question if the Western Powers are too. As a first step the Soviet Government proposes that agreement should be reached on a cut-back of foreign troops stationed in the territory of other States, having in mind subsequent step-by-step progress to the point where such troops are entirely withdrawn within national frontiers.

The Soviet Union is prepared to cut-back its troops stationed in the territory of the German Democratic Republic and other European States if the Western Powers will likewise cut back their troops in the Federal Republic of Germany and other countries. This could also be done by way of mutual example.

3. Dismantling of foreign military bases

Events of recent years confirm the fact that foreign military bases in the territory of other States constitute one of the principal sources of international conflicts and tension, fraught with danger for world peace and the development of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America towards the consolidation of their national independence. The maintenance of further construction of foreign military bases constitutes a violation of the sovereignty of States and a threat to freedom and international peace. The attempts by a number of States, principally the United States and the United Kingdom, to create new military bases in the Indian Ocean basin contrary to the clearly expressed will of the peoples of that region merit resolute condemnation. There can be no possible justification for the preservation or further creation of military bases in dependent territories, where they constitute a tool of colonialism.

The Soviet Government considers that many States are justified in demanding the abrogation of inequitable treaties concerning foreign military bases, which violate their sovereignty and contradict the principles of the United Nations Charter. The dismantling of foreign military bases would be a major contribution to the strengthening of world peace and the lessening of international tension. At the same time it would help to strengthen the independence of the young States of Africa, Asia and Latin America, to halt interference in their domestic affairs, to bring to a rapid conclusion the historic process of the liquidation of colonial regimes, and to eradicate colonialism.

4. Prevention of the further spread of nuclear weapons

Nuclear weapons harbour monstrous destructive power and their use could inflict incalculable sufferings on the peoples. Since nuclear weapons first made their appearance, the Soviet Union has called, and continues to call, for the unconditional prohibition of these weapons and the destruction of all stocks thereof accumulated by States. The complete destruction of nuclear weapons and of the means of their delivery constitutes the essence of the programme of general and complete disarmament advanced by the Soviet Government.

Given that there is as yet no agreement on general and complete disarmament, since a number of States not disposing of nuclear weapons are showing a desire to possess or gain access to such weapons and since a number of nuclear Powers are expressing readiness to grant them such access, there is now a real danger of a further spread of nuclear weapons, which could not but lead to a heightening of international tension and increased danger of nuclear war.

The greatest practical danger in this regard is presented by plans for the creation of a NATO multilateral nuclear force, under which it is proposed to give access to nuclear weapons to the Federal Republic of Germany - a State which is calling for revision of the frontiers in Europe established as a result of the Second World War.

Considering the dangerous consequences of any further dissemination of nuclear weapons, inter alia, through a NATO multilateral nuclear force, the Soviet Government proposed the conclusion of an international agreement on the non-dissemination of nuclear weapons such as would altogether deny the non-nuclear States direct or indirect access to such weapons, either directly or through military alliances.

5. Prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons

The Soviet Government considers that the conclusion of an international agreement (convention) banning the use of nuclear weapons would be an important step towards the elimination of the threat of nuclear war. The conclusion of such an agreement would lead to the further relaxation of international tension, would be a measure for checking the nuclear arms race, and would be a substantial contribution to the consolidation of confidence in relations among States.

As early as 1953 the Soviet Government proposed that, as a first step towards the complete removal of nuclear weapons from national armaments, States should assume a solemn obligation not to use atomic, hydrogen or other weapons of mass destruction. A similar proposal was advanced again by the Soviet Union in 1958. In 1960 in the Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee the Soviet Union, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania submitted a joint proposal to the effect that States possessing nuclear weapons should solemnly declare that they would refrain from being the first to use such weapons.

Now the idea of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons has received wide support from the peoples of the world and from most of the States Members of the United Nations. On the initiative of Ethiopia and other African and Asian States and with the support of the socialist countries, the sixteenth session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1961 adopted the well-known Declaration on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons. Subsequently, within and outside the United Nations there has been a lively campaign to convene an international conference for the signing of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons. In 1964 the question of the convening of such a conference was also considered in the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, the majority of whose members spoke in favour of convening it forthwith.

The Soviet Government supported and supports the proposal to hold this international conference and favours putting this proposal into effect without delay.

6. Establishment of denuclearized zones

The proposals which many States have advanced for the establishment of denuclearized zones in various regions of the world open a path to the effective limitation of the range of stationing and use of nuclear weapons, which is also of great importance for the elimination of the threat of nuclear war and the limitation of the arms race. These proposals are receiving increasing support from the peoples of the non-nuclear States in view of the growing danger to these States arising out of the policy adopted by some nuclear Powers, of stationing nuclear weapons on their territory.

In the view of the Soviet Government, the need to establish denuclearized zones is particularly acute and urgent in those regions of the world where substantial quantities of nuclear weapons are concentrated and there is great danger of the outbreak of nuclear conflict. The Soviet Government therefore supports the proposal of the Government of the Polish People's Republic concerning the establishment of a denuclearized zone in Central Europe and has put forward a proposal for transforming the whole Mediterranean region into a denuclearized zone. The Soviet Government also fully supports the proposal of the Polish People's Republic on the freezing of nuclear weapons in Central Europe.

The Soviet Government also supports proposals for establishing denuclearized zones in Northern Europe, the Balkans, Africa, the Indian Ocean, the Near and Middle East and other regions of the world.

The Soviet Government considers that, in the interests of strengthening peace and barring the spread of nuclear weapons, not only groups of States embracing whole continents or large geographical regions but also more limited groups of States and even individual countries may assume obligations for the establishment of denuclearized zones. Accordingly, the Soviet Government has already declared that it views favourably the decision of the Ceylonese Government to prohibit foreign ships carrying nuclear weapons from entering Ceylonese ports and foreign aircraft carrying nuclear bombs from landing at Ceylonese airfields. It would be a useful contribution to the strengthening of peace if other non-nuclear States would also decide to prohibit the use of their territories, ports and airfields by the nuclear Powers for the stationing of nuclear arms.

The Soviet Government is prepared to undertake an obligation to respect the status of all denuclearized zones that may be established, if the same obligation is assumed by the other nuclear Powers as well.

7. Destruction of bombers

One real disarmament measure for limiting the arms race which is undoubtedly ready to be put into practice is the destruction of bombers. This type of weapon, although becoming obsolete, still forms an important part of the arsenal of nuclear weapons delivery vehicles and may be used as a powerful means of conducting offensive war.

In an endeavour to facilitate agreement, the Soviet Government is prepared to discuss the phasing of the destruction of bombers in terms of types within an agreed over-all time-limit for the destruction of all bombers.

Since some countries that do not possess more sophisticated military equipment need bombers as a means of national defence, the Soviet Government proposes also that a formula be worked out under which the large Powers would be the first to eliminate bombers.

8. Banning of underground nuclear weapon tests

The banning of all nuclear weapon tests without exception and, hence, the actual cessation of the further development of such weapons would promote the consolidation of peace and the limitation of the arms race. The Soviet Union has been and remains a steadfast advocate of the banning of all nuclear weapon tests.

The conclusion of the Moscow Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water established favourable conditions for the final solution of the question of the banning of all nuclear weapon tests. The Soviet Government is also prepared to reach forthwith an agreement on the banning of underground nuclear weapon tests, based on the use of national means of detection for control of the ban.

9. Non-aggression pact among the States that are members of NATO
or of the Warsaw Treaty

In Europe, where both world wars began and where at present troops of the two military blocs - NATO and the Warsaw Treaty - are massed in large numbers, peace can be strengthened by uniting the efforts of all the European countries, with the participation of the United States, in the cause of guaranteeing effective European security. An effective and comprehensive system of collective security in Europe would be an alternative to the existence of opposing military alignments of States. The Soviet Government declares its readiness to come to an agreement on the creation of such a collective security system in Europe and, as a first step, proposes the conclusion of a non-aggression pact among the States that are members of NATO or of the Warsaw Treaty.

The Soviet Government is convinced that the conclusion of a non-aggression pact among the NATO and Warsaw Treaty States would substantially improve the whole international situation in Europe and in the world and would promote a significant consolidation of confidence in relations among States. In the opinion of the Soviet Government, the question of the form which the non-aggression pact should take can be settled without great difficulty.

10. Prevention of surprise attack

With a view to lessening the danger of surprise attack and thus consolidating international confidence, the Soviet Government proposes that agreement should be reached on the simultaneous execution of the following measures: reduction of foreign troops on the territory of European States, renunciation of the policy of stationing nuclear weapons on the territory of the German Democratic Republic and on the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany, stationing of observation posts on the territory of countries belonging to NATO or to the Warsaw Treaty.

The establishment of a system of observation posts can prove useful only if it is combined with such practical measures for the lessening of the threat of war as the reduction of foreign troops and the renunciation of the policy of stationing nuclear weapons on the territory of the German Democratic Republic and on the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany. Practical steps to lessen the possibility of the outbreak of a military conflict in Europe and observation posts are, in this case, two complementary parts of a single process - the relaxation of tension in one of the most dangerous regions of the world, where the armed forces of opposing groups are in direct contact.

11. Reduction of total forces

The reduction of the total forces of all States always has been and remains an important aim of the Soviet Government's policy on disarmament. The Soviet Union already has made repeated unilateral reductions in its armed forces. At present the Soviet Government considers it possible for agreement to be reached on the reduction of total forces either by the conclusion of appropriate agreements or on the basis of a policy of mutual example, if the Western Powers, for their part, are prepared to take similar practical measures.

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In proposing that agreement should be reached on the practical execution of the aforementioned measures, the Soviet Government, of course, proceeds on the premise that, along with the conclusion of agreements providing for physical disarmament measures, an understanding should be reached on mutually acceptable forms of control over the execution of such measures.

The Soviet Government appeals to all States to make fresh efforts to reach an understanding on the important and pressing questions of the reduction of international tension and the limitation of the arms race. The Soviet Government is convinced that the putting into effect of the measures referred to in this Memorandum would be a tangible contribution to the consolidation of world peace and would hasten the solution of the problem of general and complete disarmament.
