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QUESTION OF MEASURES TO PREVENT SURPRISE ATTACK

Letter dated 8 December 1958 from the Chairman  
of the Delegation of the Union of Soviet  
Socialist Republics to the General Assembly,  
addressed to Secretary-General

New York, 8 December 1958

I have the honour to forward herewith the text of a statement by the Soviet Government on measures for preventing surprise attack, made on 28 November 1958.

I should be glad if you would arrange for this statement to be issued and circulated as an official United Nations document.

(Signed) V. ZORIN  
Chairman of the Delegation  
of the USSR to the thirteenth  
session of the United Nations  
General Assembly

Statement by the Soviet Government on measures  
for preventing surprise attack

On the instructions of the Soviet Government, the USSR representative at the Geneva Conference of Experts on Measures for Preventing Surprise Attack made the following statement on 28 November 1958:

In view of the tension that has marked the international situation in recent years and of the continuing dangerous increase in the rate of armament by certain Powers, especially with regard to atomic and hydrogen weapons, the Soviet Government made a proposal concerning the need for urgent measures to be taken by States to limit the armaments race, including the cessation of nuclear weapons tests, and concerning the need to reach agreement on measures for preventing a surprise attack by one State against another. In the message sent by Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, to Mr. D. Eisenhower, President of the United States of America, on 2 July 1958, it was proposed that suitable representatives, appointed by the Governments of the Soviet Union, the United States and, possibly, by the Governments of certain other States, should meet to study the practical aspects of preventing a surprise attack by one State against another and to submit their recommendations. The message stressed that the problem had recently become particularly acute in view of the fact that the United States of America had adopted the dangerous practice of sending United States military aircraft with atomic and hydrogen bomb-loads over the territories of a number of Western European States and over the Arctic regions, in the direction of the frontiers of the USSR. As a result of the agreement reached, a conference of the representatives of ten States began work on 10 November at Geneva on drafting proposals concerning measures to prevent surprise attack. In all countries, including the Soviet Union, the convening of this conference was received with great satisfaction and in the hope that it would result in an agreement - the importance of which is undisputed - on one of the most acute international problems. The success of the conference which has begun would undoubtedly be an important step towards reducing tension in international relations, particularly among the Great Powers, and would contribute to ending the "cold war" and to the establishment of mutual confidence. Such

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success would also greatly facilitate the settlement of other international problems on which it has not yet been possible to reach agreement. In order that the conference should succeed, it is, first of all, essential for all the participating States to take a firm decision not to permit any action which would render pointless the consideration of measures for preventing surprise attack. Is it possible, however, seriously to discuss the preparation of such measures when United States aircraft are making the aforementioned flights with atomic and hydrogen bomb-loads? Of course, it is not. Attempts to justify the practice of such flights on the ground that they are necessary for the security of the United States or that they are "routine training flights" are absolutely unfounded, since it is impossible to prove that the security of the United States depends on round-the-clock-flights of aircraft thousands of kilometres away from the frontiers of the United States. It is also undeniable that such flights represent a serious threat to peace, a fact to which the Soviet Government has more than once drawn the attention of the United States Government and of the Governments of other NATO countries.

That is why, so long as these flights continue, any agreement on measures for preventing surprise attack would be virtually pointless and would merely engender among the peoples the false illusion that some measures had been taken to reduce the danger of surprise attack, whereas in fact nothing of the kind had been done. The Soviet Government considers that, if the United States of America were to give an undertaking henceforth to prohibit flights by its military aircraft with atomic and hydrogen bomb-loads in the direction of the frontiers of the Soviet Union and over the territories of other States, a considerable step would be taken towards agreement on the necessary measures to establish a system for preventing surprise attack, which should be the objective of all the participants in the negotiations. It is self-evident that a reliable system of preventing surprise attack can be established only after prohibition of the use of atomic and hydrogen weapons, their elimination from the arsenals of States, the destruction of stockpiles of these weapons and the simultaneous reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces. Nevertheless, even in the present circumstances, when the Western Powers are not prepared to prohibit nuclear

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weapons or to effect a substantial reduction of their conventional armaments, as the experience of many years of negotiation on the disarmament question has shown, there is a possibility of reaching agreement on certain practical measures for reducing the danger of surprise attack. The Soviet Government believes that the basis of such measures might be as follows:

1. The establishment of ground control posts.
2. Aerial photography in appropriate areas.

The attainment of agreement on these measures is facilitated by the fact that, according to President Eisenhower's messages to Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the United States does not object in principle to the Soviet Union's proposal for establishing a system of ground control posts, while the Soviet Union, as the Government of the USSR has more than once stated, would agree to the proposal for aerial photography in certain regions.

The Soviet Government proposes that agreement should be reached on the following specific measures:

#### Ground Control Posts

It is proposed to establish ground control posts at railway junctions, at large ports and on main motor highways, their function being to ensure that there are no dangerous concentrations of armed forces or military equipment at those points. The posts are to be set up (by agreement with the countries concerned) at agreed points throughout the territory of Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, the German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Turkey and the United Kingdom, and also in the western frontier zones of the Soviet Union and on the east coast of the United States of America. The Soviet Union agrees that within this zone twenty-eight control posts should be established in the territory of Warsaw Treaty countries, assuming of course that the Governments of those countries give their consent, including six posts in the territory of the USSR, and that there should be fifty-four posts in the

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territory of North Atlantic Treaty and Baghdad Pact countries, including six posts in the territory of the United States. In the opinion of the Soviet Government, the establishment of ground control posts at railway junctions, at large ports and on main motor highways could be one effective way of reducing the danger of surprise attack. It can scarcely be denied that even with nuclear weapons preparations for a modern major war inevitably entail concentration of large military formations at certain points, together with a great quantity of armaments and equipment: aircraft, tanks, artillery, warships, submarines, and land, sea and air transport. The function of the ground control posts proposed by the Soviet Union would be, inter alia, to ensure that there was no dangerous concentration of armed forces or military equipment. That function is perfectly feasible, since preparations requiring large-scale movements of troops on railways and main roads and through large ports cannot in practice be camouflaged, and the establishment of control posts at such points would make it possible to detect preparations of that sort in good time. The choice of the area in which the posts are to be situated is governed by the fact that concentrations of troops and military equipment inevitably occur, first and foremost, in those areas where large contingents of the armed forces of both sides face each other: as history shows, that is where war is most likely to break out. Europe must be regarded as such an area, since it was the main theatre of military operations in the last two world wars and since the principal forces of the two military blocs - NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization - are now concentrated there. The area in which ground control posts are situated must also include the territory of Greece, Turkey and Iran. This is perfectly natural, since Greece and Turkey, being members of NATO, take part in all the military measures carried out by this group and also since military bases directed against the Warsaw Treaty countries are situated in their territories. With respect to Iran, which like Turkey is a member of the Baghdad Pact, it is recently becoming increasingly involved in the military measures being carried out by the members of this Pact. It must also be borne in mind that, since the proposal for ground control posts affects the territories of all the Warsaw

Treaty countries, the area of distribution of these posts should, of course, at least include the majority of European NATO countries. If all the States participating in the Geneva Conference agree on the need to work out specific measures to avert the danger of surprise attack, they cannot fail to agree that ground control posts, as one such measure, should be established first and foremost in Europe and in the territory of the above-mentioned countries of the Near and Middle East.

#### Aerial Photography Zones

As one of the measures for averting a surprise attack, the Government of the USSR proposes the establishment of an aerial photography zone in Europe extending 800 kilometres to the east and west of the dividing line between the principal armed forces of the NATO and Warsaw Treaty countries and also, for the reasons given above, in the territory of Greece, Turkey and Iran. Notwithstanding the great importance of establishing an aerial photography zone in Europe and in the territory of Turkey and Iran, aerial photography is also of some importance in other parts of the world. The Soviet Government consequently proposes the establishment of an aerial photography zone in the Far East and in the territory of the United States of America, this zone to include the territory of the USSR to the east of longitude 108° east and United States territory of equal area to the west of longitude 90° west, as well as the entire territory of Japan, including Okinawa Island. The need to include Japan is dictated by the fact that foreign military bases and foreign troops which could be used to carry out a surprise attack are located in the territory of Japan, including Okinawa Island. For these reasons, it would be unjustifiable not to include Japan in the aerial photography zone. The Soviet Government is acting on the assumption that the establishment of an aerial photography zone in the Far East and in the territory of the United States is possible only if an agreement is reached on establishing ground control posts and an aerial photography zone in Europe and the Middle East. This stems from the particular significance of the European continent as the most dangerous region, the one in which - as already indicated - the principal armed forces of two political-military groupings, NATO and the Warsaw Treaty, are facing each other.

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Steps that must be taken by States to ensure the effectiveness  
of measures for averting a surprise attack

The Soviet Government believes that ground control posts and aerial photography cannot of themselves reduce the danger of surprise attack, particularly with the present types of weapons. This becomes particularly obvious if it is remembered that the establishment of ground control posts and the execution of aerial photography do not affect existing means of surprise attack and would lead neither to a reduction in the number of such attacks nor to the removal of such devices from certain areas which are potentially the most dangerous.

Ground control posts and aerial photography cannot be effective measures for reducing the danger of surprise attack unless they are linked with steps to reduce the concentration of forces of the opposing politico-military groupings in the potentially most dangerous areas of Europe and to prevent the stationing of the most dangerous and lethal types of weapons of mass destruction in part of Central Europe, to go no further, namely, in the territory of the two parts of Germany. The Soviet Government accordingly proposes that an agreement should be reached (a) to reduce the strength of foreign armed forces in the territories of European States, and (b) not to station modern types of weapons of mass destruction in the territories of either the Federal Republic of Germany or the German Democratic Republic.

(a) A one-third reduction of foreign forces in Europe.

To achieve the above aims, the Soviet Government proposes that agreement should be reached on a reduction, by not less than one-third, of the foreign armed forces in the territory of European States situated within the agreed control zone. It is beyond dispute that the concentration of foreign armed forces in the territory of European States has been one of the main causes leading to the present tense situation in Europe, to the agitated nature of the day-to-day existence of the peoples of Europe, which in many ways resembles life on a volcano. This situation has become even more acute as a result of the latest NATO measures. Quite apart from the threat to the security of the

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peoples of Europe, which such a policy entails, the Powers which are mainly responsible for the activities of NATO are continuing to exert crude pressure on the European members of that organization, impelling them along the dangerous path of a further increase in the number of European armies equipped with the latest military equipment, including atomic, hydrogen and rocket weapons. The reduction of foreign armed forces in the territory of European States by not less than one-third would be a first step towards restoring the situation in Europe to normal. The Soviet Government considers that, with goodwill on both sides, it would be possible to reach agreement on this question, since far from impairing the security of either side, it would, on the contrary, strengthen European security. Such a step would reassure the peoples of Europe and contribute greatly to diminishing the mistrust which is poisoning relations between States.

(b) Agreement not to station nuclear weapons and rockets in the territory of Germany.

The policy pursued by the leading NATO Powers of stationing nuclear weapons and rockets in European States represents an especial danger to peace. None can deny that it is dangerous to equip the armed forces of the NATO States with modern weapons of mass destruction and to convert their territories into strategic armed camps. The greatest danger to the peoples of Europe lies in the fact that the leading NATO Powers have decided to equip the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany, a country in which the revanchists, who are planning military aggression against their neighbours, are steadily gaining ground. Yet this is the core of the present policy both of the Federal Republic of Germany and of the European Western Powers, despite the fact that it is a serious threat to the cause of peace and to Western Germany itself, a fact to which the Soviet Government has repeatedly drawn the attention of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. If there is a genuine desire to work out practical measures for reducing the danger of a surprise attack rather than to indulge in empty discussion of the subject, the Soviet Government considers that such measures must be accompanied by an undertaking

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on the part of States possessing atomic and hydrogen weapons and rockets not to station such weapons and rockets in either part of Germany, where the main armed forces of the North Atlantic Treaty and the Warsaw Pact Powers come into contact and where even a slight incident might be fraught with tragic consequences for the fate of the world. Such an undertaking would be in line with the vital interests of all European peoples, who are justifiably concerned at the present European situation and who realize what catastrophes may result from the use of nuclear weapons, especially in the densely populated areas of Europe. This undertaking would have a beneficial effect on the entire European situation and would facilitate the carrying out of other measures to remove the threat of war. These are the proposals which the Soviet Government submits for the consideration of the Geneva Conference.

If agreement were reached at the Conference on the establishment of ground control posts and aerial photography zones and if this agreement were carried into effect in conjunction with a one-third reduction in the foreign armed forces in the territory of European States and with a ban on the stationing of nuclear weapons and rockets in either part of Germany, it would give substance to measures to avert the danger of surprise attack and would ensure their practical application, a goal towards which all the participants in the Conference should strive. The Soviet Government notes with regret that the Western Powers take a different view of the tasks of the Geneva Conference, as is borne out by the draft agenda of the Conference which they have submitted. The contents of this agenda amount to a demand that the Conference should confine itself to examining the existing means of surprise attack: guided missiles; strategic air forces; tactical air forces; ground forces; submarines capable of discharging guided missiles, etc. Indeed, this agenda does not even raise the question of elaborating measures to prevent surprise attack or of taking any practical steps to that end. In the circumstances, can it be said that this agenda makes it possible to work out measures to prevent or reduce the danger of a surprise attack? The answer can only be in the negative. It may well be asked what is the point of studying such devices as inter-continental rockets, seeing

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that atomic and hydrogen weapons have not been banned, although the Soviet Government has been pressing for the prohibition of these weapons of mass destruction for over twelve years? The Soviet Government is, as before, ready to agree to a complete ban of atomic and hydrogen weapons and rockets and also to a considerable reduction in conventional armaments and armed forces and to sign a suitable agreement to that effect. If the Western Powers had taken a similar position, nuclear weapons and rockets would have been banned long ago. However, their attitude in the United Nations shows that they are not prepared to take such a step. They are at present making no attempt to conceal the fact - repeatedly reported in the Press of the United States of America the United Kingdom, France and other NATO countries - that in proposing the above-mentioned agenda for the Geneva Conference, they wish to ascertain the military potential of the Warsaw Pact countries, particularly as regards the newest weapons, and that this is the purpose they wish the work of the Conference to serve. It is not what might be called a modest aim. If the Soviet Union and its allies participating in the Conference were to follow their example, the end result would be a contest to see who could obtain the most military information. Such information might well be of interest to certain agencies on either side, but that is surely not the purpose of the Conference.

It is clear that if this were the case, the Conference would only serve to increase distrust and suspicion among the Powers. The Soviet Government cannot aid and abet those whose desire is not to avert the danger of surprise attack but to collect intelligence information about the latest atomic, hydrogen, rocket and other weapons of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government is convinced that, if the participants in the Conference would take into account each other's legitimate security interests, refrain from actions likely to increase international tension and mutual distrust and make a sincere effort to come to an understanding, an agreement on measures to reduce the danger of a surprise attack is entirely possible. For its part, the Soviet Government is ready to continue to make every effort to enable practical results to be achieved at the Geneva Conference as regards the preparation of measures to reduce the danger of surprise attack and consequently the danger of another war.

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