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QUESTION OF MEASURES TO PREVENT SURPRISE ATTACK

Letter dated 16 January 1959 from the Permanent Representative
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, addressed to the
Secretary-General

New York, 16 January 1959

I have the honour to forward herewith the text of a note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, delivered on 10 January 1959 to the Embassy of the United States in the USSR concerning the resumption of the Geneva Conference of experts for the study of possible measures which might be helpful in preventing surprise attack and for the preparation of a report thereon to Governments.

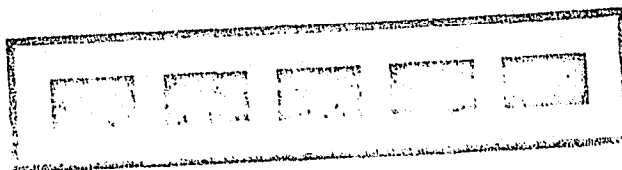
I should be glad if you would arrange for this note to be issued and circulated as an official document of the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council.

(Signed) A. SOBOLEV
Permanent Representative of the USSR
to the United Nations

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America, and on the instructions of the Soviet Government has the honour to make the following statement:

From 10 November to 18 December 1958 a conference of experts attended by delegations from Albania, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, representing the Warsaw Treaty countries, and delegations from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Canada and Italy, representing the North Atlantic alliance, was held at Geneva for the purpose of drafting recommendations to Governments concerning immediately practicable measures for the prevention of surprise attack.

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On the initiative of the Western Powers, that Conference interrupted its work on 10 December 1958 for the Christmas and New Year holidays.

The USSR Government felt that the conference should not interrupt its work, but should continue its efforts to find mutually-acceptable solutions to the problem before it. The USSR Government was obliged, however, to accept the fact that the Western experts were not prepared to continue the talks and refused to agree to the date proposed for the resumption of the conference's work - 5 January 1959. As is known, the participants at the conference had agreed that the interruption in the latter's work should be as brief as possible and that the study of the problem of preventing surprise attack should be resumed with the least possible delay.

In view of the urgency of the problem of averting the danger of surprise attack, a danger which, far from diminishing, is on the contrary increasing daily, the Soviet Government believes that the conference should resume its work at the earliest possible date. The Soviet Government proposes that the Conference should take up its work on 15 January 1959.

The Soviet Union's position on the substance of the problem is explained in the Soviet Government's statement on measures for preventing surprise attack submitted to the conference by the Soviet delegation on 28 November 1958, as also in other relevant documents indicated in the conference's interim report to the Governments of the participating States.

The Soviet Government hopes that the Government of the United States of America will carefully consider the points set forth in this note and will give an affirmative reply as regards the date for the resumption of the conference.

Similar notes have been addressed to the Governments of the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Canada.

Moscow, 10 January 1959.
