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LETTER DATED 8 JULY 1960 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

New York, 8 July 1960

I have the honour to enclose the text of a letter dated 30 June from the Rt. Hon. J.G. Diefenbaker, Prime Minister of Canada, to Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. In this letter the Prime Minister expresses serious regret and concern at the action of the Soviet Delegation and the Delegations of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Romania, in leaving the Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee without warning. He concludes that there was every chance for progress at the time of the Committee's precipitate adjournment, and expresses the hope that the Soviet Government will find it possible to resume participation in the Committee's vital work.

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request that the Prime Minister's letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly and of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

(Signed) C.S.A. RITCHIE
Permanent Representative of Canada
to the United Nations

TEXT OF LETTER DATED 30 JUNE 1960 FROM THE RT. HON. J.G. DIEFENBAKER, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA, TO MR. N.S. KHRUSHCHEV, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE USSR

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have received your letter of 27 June announcing the decision of your Government to discontinue its participation in the work of the ten nation Disarmament Committee. The action of the Soviet Delegation and the Delegations of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania in leaving the Committee without warning gives cause for serious regret and concern. I find these developments deeply disquieting.

At the outset, let me dispose of the charges you level at the positions taken by the Western Delegations, particularly by the Canadian Representative. Your remarks seem to me not so much concerned with the conduct of the negotiations as with the aim of creating differences among the Western Delegations.

If your allegations against the Canadian Government are seriously meant, they constitute a transparent misrepresentation of Canada's position. The Canadian Government has throughout adopted in the ten nation Committee a strong and independent stand in support of balanced concessions leading towards agreement. Furthermore, despite all setbacks we have not ceased to advocate in other fields the continuance of a policy of negotiation with a view to the restoration of mutual confidence between the Soviet and Western worlds.

The seriousness of the Canadian Government's interest and purpose in embarking on the disarmament negotiations has been amply demonstrated. On a number of occasions, most recently on 24 June, the Canadian Delegation made detailed suggestions designed to bring the ten nation Committee to grips with the task of real negotiation. Unfortunately, the USSR and its allies did not respond to these suggestions or to a number of other Western proposals to move towards specific measures of disarmament.

Indeed I find it difficult to understand the logic of your Government's action in discontinuing these important talks at this juncture. At the time of the failure of the summit meeting, the Canadian Government took the view that all the other East-West negotiations then proceeding automatically assumed

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greater importance, since they constituted a useful means through which the deterioration of international relations could be checked. In the view of the Canadian Government the situation demanded that the members of the Committee put behind them the opening phases of the negotiations and proceed immediately with their task.

It was in this spirit that on 6 June I replied to your earlier letter enclosing the new Soviet disarmament proposals of 2 June. The Canadian Government along with the ten nation Committee, found your revised proposals worthy of careful study. In this connexion, I would call your attention to the following remarks made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in the House of Commons on 15 June 1960:

> "The Canadian Government wants these proposals to receive a patient and searching examination in the ten nation Committee, as marking the opening phase of detailed, business-like and uninterrupted negotiations. We believe there should be no hasty, ill-considered reaction to the new Soviet proposals, but the most careful and constructive examination of these proposals in the Committee which circumstances permit."

Nevertheless your revised proposals embodied a number of provisions which differed materially from those you submitted to the United Nations on 18 September 1959. It was not unreasonable therefore that the submission of your proposals of 2 June should have given rise to a series of probing questions by the Western side in the course of the ensuing sessions of the ten nation Committee. Nothing in your letter explains why during the same period the Soviet Government and its allies began to give public indications of an intention to break off the negotiations. Such actions stand in odd contrast with your professed desire for genuine negotiations and scarcely reflect a recognition of the urgency and importance of the work of the Committee

My greatest difficult is in understanding why the Soviet Government chose to break off the negotiations when it was aware that the Western countries were about to introduce new proposals which, together with the Soviet proposals of 2 June, gave promise of bringing new life into the negotiations. A full opportunity was offered to the USSR and its allies to reconsider its position on the day following the withdrawal of the Soviet and other Eastern Delegations. That opportunity was not taken.

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It had always been my understanding that the General Assembly of the United Nations would have an opportunity periodically to review the work of the ten nation Disarmament Committee. I had assumed that the next session of the General Assembly would provide the first such occasion. I had hoped that, rather than return to the United Nations with a record of failure, the ten nation Committee could instead have reported progress. You suggest in your letter that progress in the negotiations was not to be expected. My conclusion is that there was every chance for progress at the time of the Committee's precipitate adjournment.

When you have had an opportunity to study the new proposals from the Western side, I hope you will agree that these proposals show that the Western countries are sincerely desirous of reaching a disarmament agreement. I hope too that on reflection you will find it possible to authorize your Representative to resume participation in the vital work of the ten nation Committee.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) J.G. DIEFENBAKER
