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NOTE VERBALE DATED 5 JULY 1961 FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

The Permanent Mission of the USSR to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Secretariat and has the honour to enclose herewith the text of a Note on the question of the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests from the Soviet Government to the Government of the United States of America, of 5 July 1961.

The Permanent Mission asks that the text of this Note should be published as an official United Nations document and circulated to the delegations of all States Members of the United Nations.

NOTE FROM THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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 has the honour to state the following.

The Soviet Government has studied the United States Government's reply of 17 June 1961 to the Memorandum on the question of the discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests handed by Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, to Mr. Kennedy, President of the United States of America, during their meeting at Vienna on 4 June 1961. This reply shows that the United States Government has, regrettably, not agreed to the Soviet Government's proposals, which are aimed at facilitating and speeding up the solution of the problem of the discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests for all time.

The contents and tone of the United States Government's aide-memoire prove that, instead of engaging in a business-like and constructive exchange of views, the United States Government has taken a different course - that of distorting the Soviet proposals and putting out a fanciful version of the Soviet Union's position. The United States Government is clearly trying to aggravate the controversy and at the same time to introduce elements into it which have no bearing on the matter under discussion. The purpose of this is apparently to clear the United States of responsibility for the fruitlessness of the Geneva talks. There is, moreover, not the slightest indication of a desire to facilitate agreement on the discontinuance of nuclear tests. The United States aide-memoire, on the contrary, gives the inescapable impression that the United States now has only one concern - to justify in the eyes of the world opinion the resumption of nuclear weapons tests, preparations for which are being made in the United States, and to find a pretext for destroying the chances of any possible agreement between the Powers on the prohibition of such tests. Indeed, the United States Press makes no attempt to conceal the fact that the United States Department of Defense - the Pentagon - and the United States Atomic Energy Commission are anxiously awaiting the signal to resume nuclear tests.

It is apparent for that reason that the United States Government is trying to give a distorted representation of the entire course of the three-Power talks at Geneva.

The Soviet Government deems it necessary to recall the main facts concerning the negotiations on the discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests and, in particular, the positions of the parties to the Geneva Conference.

The Soviet Union has for many years steadfastly pressed for a permanent world-wide ban on all forms of nuclear explosions, which serve only to foster the atomic armaments race and endanger human life and health. The Soviet Union was the first of the nuclear Powers to point to the need for the immediate cessation of dangerous experiments with nuclear weapons.

Wishing to facilitate the preparation of an international agreement on this matter, the Soviet Union unilaterally ceased nuclear weapons testing as early as March 1958, although it is common knowledge that the USSR had conducted fewer test explosions than the United States and the United Kingdom. And how had the United States and United Kingdom Governments responded? With a new series of test explosions of nuclear bombs of unprecedented intensity. The Soviet Union, nevertheless, continued to press for universal and immediate cessation of nuclear tests.

In 1959 the Soviet Government decided not to resume nuclear explosions if, on their side, the Western Powers would not undertake any such explosions. The Soviet Union strictly abided by the commitment it had assumed, in spite of the fact that France, an ally of the United States of America and the United Kingdom in the NATO military bloc, regularly carries out nuclear tests.

It was owing to the persistent efforts of the Soviet Union that the Geneva three-Power Conference was called at all. What is more, the whole history of the Geneva talks is, above all, the history of a ceaseless search by the Soviet Union for mutually acceptable solutions with respect to the prohibition of all nuclear weapons tests. As is known, the Soviet Government, with a view to reaching agreement, accepted a whole series of United States and United Kingdom proposals on important points of the draft treaty in preparation. If some progress has been achieved at the Geneva Conference, it was primarily due to the good will of the Soviet Union and its sincere desire to make headway with the matter of stopping the tests.

What, on the other hand, was the position of the United States Government and the other Western Powers? They held back a solution of this problem on various far-fetched pretexts. Who does not know that it was precisely the Western Powers, and first and foremost the Government of the United States of America, which for a long time publicly opposed any negotiations on the cessation of nuclear weapons tests?

If the course of the Geneva Conference is viewed not, as the United States Government is trying to look at it, in a distorting mirror but directly, it will become clear to any observer with the slightest sense of objectivity that the United States effort during the whole of the Conference at Geneva has actually been directed towards hindering the preparation of an agreement on the cessation of nuclear weapons tests. There is no lack of facts showing that but for the United States and United Kingdom position aimed at frustrating agreement, the work of the Geneva Conference would have been completed and a treaty signed long ago.

For example, in 1958 a favourable atmosphere developed after the meeting of experts of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and other countries, which made a detailed study of methods of detecting nuclear explosions and worked out unanimous recommendations concerning verification of the cessation of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests. All that remained was for the Governments which had taken part in the talks and approved the recommendations to conclude rapidly, on the basis of those recommendations, an agreement on the cessation of all nuclear weapons tests.

When the Conference of representatives of the USSR, the United States of America and the United Kingdom opened at Geneva, a number of articles of a draft treaty on the cessation of tests were agreed upon. However, this apparently seriously disturbed those circles in the United States of America which were and still are frightened by the very prospect of prohibiting nuclear tests. For it is a fact that the United States Government went back on what had been agreed upon and made attempts to revise, and thereby virtually to repudiate, the recommendations of the scientific experts it had itself approved.

The United States Government expended no little effort on discrediting those recommendations! Its representatives stressed primarily that the system of control

for underground explosions worked out by the experts in 1958 would not be sufficiently perfect. Basing itself on this contrived argument, the United States first demanded the exclusion from the treaty of all provisions dealing with the prohibition of underground nuclear weapons tests. When this met with determined opposition on the part of the Soviet Union, it then put forward a proposal to exclude from the treaty underground nuclear tests below a given yield.

The excuse invariably given by the United States representatives for making all these demands was that the system of control worked out by the experts was not fool-proof and could not be relied upon. However, according to the scientific experts who worked out the recommendations there is already every possibility of detecting the violation by States of an agreement on the cessation of tests and, therefore, of ensuring that they fulfil their obligations.

But, even if the system of control were in any way imperfect, that consideration can by no means be put forward as an obstacle to the reaching of agreement, for with the progress of science and technology more highly perfected instruments will be developed and, consequently, the control system will be improved. That is why, in the part of the draft treaty agreed upon, there is a provision to the effect that, two years after the entry into force of the treaty on the cessation of tests and annually thereafter, the control organization may introduce improvements into the control system in the light of experience and scientific progress.

The Government of the United States of America is intentionally ignoring this important provision, on which agreement was reached after long effort. Allegations that control methods are technically imperfect show once again that the United States of America is not interested in honest agreement on a treaty that would put an end to nuclear tests once and for all, and is seeking various loopholes to circumvent the treaty by turning it into a mere scrap of paper. Is this not shown by the fact that the United States of America, in its efforts to impose such a treaty, is asking that the arrangement to refrain from underground testing of low-yield atomic bombs (i.e. the so-called moratorium on such explosions) should run for only three years? But what would be the result of agreeing to a moratorium of the kind proposed by the United States? The actual result would be that the Soviet Union's territory would be placed under control

while the United States would be free, on any specious pretext, to resume nuclear weapons testing after three years. Anyone can see that under such conditions control of the cessation of nuclear tests would serve no other purpose than the collection of espionage information.

Thus, the United States position on underground explosions is already enough to make an agreement impossible. However, this is not the only question in which the United States Government has demonstrated its unwillingness to move towards the conclusion of an agreement.

In its Note, the United States Government is trying to publicize the proposals recently made by the United States delegation at the Geneva Conference. At the same time, however, it is studiously ignoring the fact that its position has not changed with regard to the most important matter, namely the question of recognizing the complete equality of rights of the sides, of assuring them equal conditions of control, without which agreement is inconceivable. If we are to have a serious approach to the conclusion of an agreement, these barriers must first be removed, since only then will it be possible to break the deadlock at the Geneva Conference and clear the way for agreement.

In this connexion, we cannot ignore the objections of the United States Government to the Soviet Government's proposal that the control organization should be headed not by a single administrator, but by an administrative council consisting of equal representatives of the three principal groups of States: the socialist States, the capitalist States members of Western military blocs and the neutralist States. The Soviet Government's proposal to establish an administrative council of this composition was based on the realities of modern international life, and on the need to create equal conditions for the representatives of all three groups of States and to exclude any possibility of abuse of the executive authority in the control organ and of detriment to the security of the parties to the treaty.

In its Note of 17 June, the United States Government also recognizes that the control system should be so devised that "no party to the treaty and no operator of the control system could hurt the interests of another party or abuse the authority granted by the treaty". However, it contradicts itself when it insists that the executive authority in the control organ should be entrusted

to one person. For experience has shown that there are no people capable of dealing impartially with any international event or any social system. And this is not surprising, since ⁽no one can live in society and not be exposed to the influence of a particular ideology and of the interrelationships between the different groups within that society. This is why there are neutral countries, but there are not nor can there be any neutral persons.⁾

We do not need to look far for example, and very instructive ones too. The tragedy of the Congo has clearly shown the whole world how dangerous it is to entrust the task of implementing responsible decisions to one man. Only those who are politically blind can fail to see that it is precisely with the help of Hammarskjold, who poses as a neutral person, that the colonialists have committed and are committing monstrous crimes on Congolese soil. It was none other than Hammarskjold who completely reversed the Security Council decisions, aimed at defending the national independence of the Congo, to the advantage of the colonialists. Using Hammarskjold and the United Nations officials he has planted there, the colonialists are stifling the liberating forces in the Congo and taking reprisals on the Congolese patriots. How can we consider Hammarskjold's conduct in the Congo as neutral, when he scoffs at elementary justice and protects the murderers of that ardent fighter for the independence of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba?

No, on the Congolese question, as in other international matters, Hammarskjold is not neutral, although he is the representative of neutral Sweden. In fact, he was and still is the champion of the policy of one group of States only - the capitalist States. And now, after all this, the United States Government is trying to impose a man like Hammarskjold as the single administrator in the organ called upon to exercise control over the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests.

Naturally, no State which cherishes the cause of peace will want to repeat the experience with another Hammarskjold, especially in matters affecting the most sensitive interests of the peoples - the interests of their security.

How is it possible to exclude all one-sided action in the control organ, which would infringe upon the legitimate interests of any States parties to the treaty? The Soviet Government has considered this question and after thorough study has reached the firm conclusion that only an executive organ composed of

equal representatives from the three principal groups of States can ensure fair and objective control over the fulfilment of the obligations assumed by States.

Objecting to an equal collaboration of representatives of the three principal groups of States in the chief executive organ of the control organization, the United States Government again alleges that such collaboration would make this organ unworkable and would be tantamount to the introduction of a right of veto. Since we are on the subject of a right of veto, the United States Government itself wants to give this right to the single administrator. In fact, the United States wants the person appointed to head the control organ himself to decide whether an inspection should be made of a particular event which a State party to the treaty has asked should be examined. The result is that this administrator will essentially have a right of veto, which would enable him not only to hinder the carrying out of inspections where they are asked for, but even to prevent them entirely. And since the administrator cannot be neutral, we cannot expect his decisions to be objective. The State whose interests are unlawfully prejudiced by the administrator will naturally not agree with his demands. And this would, to all intents and purposes, paralyze the control activity and make it ineffectual.

It is therefore legitimate to ask who is, in fact, insisting on the introduction of the right of veto and on the establishment of an unworkable control organ: the Soviet Union, which proposes setting up a three-sided administrative council on a basis of equality of rights, or the United States, which asks for the control organ to be handed over entirely to one man who, they calculate, would serve as the tool of the Western Powers? In the light of the foregoing, the only possible conclusion is that the United States Government is seeking the establishment of just such an organ in which it would be given unilateral advantages, in which the "veto" would prevail and would be wielded by a henchman of one of the alignments of States whose actions, if only in the United Nations, experience has shown to be incompatible with international legality.

The position of the Soviet Union entirely excludes the possibility of any arbitrariness in carrying out inspections. The USSR proposals for annual on-site inspection quotas clearly state that the dispatch of an inspection team within the limits of the agreed quotas must be carried out at the request of the other

side and that no one - neither the control commission nor the administrative council nor any other organ of the control organization - can prevent the exercise of the rights of States to have an inspection carried out within the limits of the quota, provided that objective instrument readings indicate the occurrence of a suspicious event.

The Soviet Government and its head, N.S. Khrushchev, have repeatedly stated that the Soviet Union has not demanded and is not demanding a special or dominating position for itself in the control organ. The Soviet Union seeks for itself precisely the same rights as all other parties to the treaty will have.

In its Note, the Government of the United States says that for almost three years the United States has assumed the "risk" of not testing nuclear weapons, without an international agreement on the question, and that it cannot assume that "risk" indefinitely.

If the matter is stated in these terms, it must be said that the risk is assumed not by the United States but by the Soviet Union. It is well known that, while the USSR is not carrying out any experimental explosions of nuclear weapons, France, an ally of the United States in the NATO military bloc, is conducting nuclear weapons tests and thus has the opportunity of improving those weapons in the interests of the United States of America also, as its ally in that bloc.

The cardinal solution of the problem, the solution that will prevent a new world war, is general and complete disarmament. Under circumstances where the Western Powers, seeking to obtain unilateral military advantages, have stultified the negotiations on the discontinuance of tests, the only way out of the resulting situation is by finding a combined solution to the interdependent problems of general and complete disarmament and of the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests. The advantage of that solution is that it removes the main obstacle which the Western Powers now see in the Soviet proposal for the establishment of an administrative council of three members.

As N.S. Khrushchev, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, emphasized at the session of the General Assembly, if the Western Powers will accept the proposal for general and complete disarmament, the Soviet Government, for its part, is prepared unconditionally to accept any proposals of the Western Powers with regard to control. In opposing an interdependent solution of the

problems of the discontinuance of nuclear tests and of general and complete disarmament, the United States Government is pretending not to notice this consent on the part of the Soviet Union to the forms of control suggested by the Western Powers subject to the implementation of general and complete disarmament.

Nor is it possible to overlook the United States Government's reference in its Note of 17 June to the fact that, if the two questions were considered simultaneously, the agreement on the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests would be put off indefinitely and that it would be necessary "to start all over again" and so on. It follows necessarily from those words that the United States and its Western allies in the military blocs intend to delay indefinitely the conclusion of a treaty on general and complete disarmament, thereby assuming a grave responsibility for all the consequences. The Soviet Government cannot agree that everything would have to be started all over again in the negotiations on general and complete disarmament.

It is almost two years since the Soviet Union put forward its proposals on general and complete disarmament. That problem was discussed in detail for several months in the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament which sat last year.

The Soviet Government had hoped that the new United States Government would revise the policy of the Eisenhower Government on this matter, a policy which can only be called obstructionist. But in the light of the statements in the United States Note, as well as in the light of some other facts, it must be acknowledged that these hopes have not yet been justified. The Government of the USSR would like to express the hope that the two great Powers, the USSR and the United States, will find a common language on the disarmament problem.

General and complete disarmament has now become an urgent historical necessity and the only true way to lasting peace on earth. And although the question of the discontinuance of tests is of no small importance and an agreement on that question would be a significant step towards disarmament, it must be clearly realized that the discontinuance of nuclear tests by itself could not remove the threat of atomic war and put an end to the arms race. In order to solve the great problem of ridding mankind of wars and the burden of armaments, general and complete disarmament is essential. The military machine of States must be completely crushed and annihilated.

The Soviet Government agrees that a successful conclusion of the negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear tests would promote progress in disarmament measures, and for its part, it has done and is doing everything possible to carry out that task. The Note of 17 June, however, makes it clear that the Government of the United States now wishes to use the Geneva three-Power Conference, which is concerned only with the question of the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests, as a prerequisite for the solution of the much broader and more important problem of general and complete disarmament. Thus, on the one hand, the Government of the United States has made great efforts to bring about a deadlock at the Geneva Conference and, on the other hand, it is now making the fate of the negotiations on the disarmament problem as a whole contingent on the outcome of the negotiations at Geneva. That is strange logic, to say the least. It is convenient only for those who wish to undermine both the negotiations on general and complete disarmament and the negotiations on the discontinuance of nuclear tests.

It is regrettable that the Government of the United States considers it appropriate to embark in its Note on the slippery path of attacking the social system of the Soviet Union. Is this a demonstration of animosity towards Communism or an attempt to distract attention from the weakness of the United States position on disarmament questions?

The Soviet Government has no intention of embarking here on a discussion with the United States Government on the question of which society - the socialist or the capitalist - is "open" and which is "closed". The Government of the USSR takes the view that, if full play was allowed to the feelings of each side regarding the social system of the other side in the consideration of the question of disarmament or the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests, or in general, any question of inter-State relations, it would have to be admitted that all basis for agreement was virtually excluded in advance. The Soviet Government has always held this view and considers it the only correct one. However, since the United States Government has raised this question, we should like to state with the utmost firmness that Soviet society is indeed tightly and safely closed to the activities of every kind of exploiter and oppressor who lives on the blood and sweat of the people; it is closed to those who are the enemies of the social and

state system of the USSR. But it opens up unlimited scope for the satisfaction of the needs and aspirations of the workers who have complete power in the Soviet Union and are entirely masters of the fruits of their labour.

But for whom is United States society open? It is only open to the exploiters, to the handful of monopolies who have placed the whole power of the State at the service of their narrow interests. The Government of a country whose system is based on brutal exploitation of man by man should be the last to be giving lessons in democracy to the Soviet people.

If there is any truth in the assertions which the United States leaders are so fond of making, that in the United States of America all secrets are accessible to all, that the public is informed of every step taken by the Government and other official institutions, then how would the United States Government answer, for example, such questions as these:

Did the American people, or even such a lofty body as the United States Congress, know about the provocative flights of United States U-2 aircraft within the boundaries of the USSR? Obviously, they did not know until those flights were revealed and until the culprits were caught in the act.

Was it with the American people's approval that atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? No, the American people knew nothing about the preparations for that inhuman act and, so far as is known, condemns it.

Lastly, was the American people asked when the recent aggression against Cuba was prepared and organized from the territory and with the support of the United States? No, that was kept a deep secret from the American people.

It seems that all these facts easily find their place in the conception of a "free" and "open" society, which is given such publicity in the United States Government's Note, but there is no place for them within the framework of a truly free and truly open society.

It has long been known that some foreign military staffs are simply waiting for the Soviet Union to open up its state frontiers and to facilitate espionage activities on Soviet territory. The Governments of the Western Powers frequently acquiesce in the demands of those bodies and carry out their policy even in international negotiations. Is there not evidence of this, in particular, in the insistent demands of the Western Powers for inflating in every way the number

of on-site inspections to investigate the position with regard to the discontinuance of nuclear tests on the territory of the USSR? By all appearances, the United States Government is ready to sacrifice to the interests of intelligence the interests of achieving an agreement on the discontinuance of explosions of nuclear weapons.

The Soviet Government has already stated repeatedly that it is willing to introduce in its territory all the measures of control necessary for implementing an agreement on the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests. But the Soviet Government considers it essential to emphasize once again that it will never agree to control being exercised in isolation from disarmament and becoming control over armaments, which the United States has been seeking for many years in the United Nations as elsewhere.

At the same time, the Soviet Union declares that it will never itself agree to any disarmament measures without effective control over the implementation of those measures. The Soviet Government will not agree to disarmament without control, since it has learned from bitter experience not to rely on the word of honour of its Western partners in agreements.

The Soviet Government firmly adheres to the views which were stated in its Memorandum of 4 June 1961. It would like the Government of the United States to have a correct understanding of the Soviet Union's point of view, as that will help to find a basis for reaching agreement both on the problem of general and complete disarmament and on the question of the discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests.

5 July 1961.
