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LETTER DATED 25 JULY 1961 FROM THE ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour, on instructions from the Government of the United States of America, to transmit the attached document, "The United States note of 15 July concerning the Geneva test ban negotiations", which was delivered by the Government of the United States of America to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 15 July 1961.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1578 (XV) which, inter alia, "requests the States concerned in the Geneva negotiations: (a) To keep the Disarmament Commission periodically informed of the progress of their negotiations; (b) To report the results of their negotiations to the Disarmament Commission and to the General Assembly". I should be grateful if you would circulate this note to all Members of the United Nations as a document of the General Assembly and of the Disarmament Commission.

(Signed) Francis T.P. PLIMPTON
Acting Permanent Representative of the
United States of America to the United
Nations

United States note of 15 July concerning the
Geneva test ban negotiations

1. The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and has the honour to state the following:
2. The United States Government has examined the reply of the Soviet Government of 5 July 1961 to the note of the Government of the United States of 17 June 1961 on the question of the nuclear test ban negotiations. Apparently in an effort to avoid the question of halting nuclear weapons tests under effective international control, the Soviet note contains a multitude of irrelevant and unwarranted comments. The United States Government sees no point in replying to these comments.
3. Instead, the United States Government prefers to confine its reply to the Soviet Government to the central issue in the nuclear test negotiations. This issue is clear: it is whether the Soviet Union is now willing and prepared to reach an accord which would halt nuclear weapons tests under effective international control. For its part, the United States is fully prepared to accept all the necessary international controls in its territory to ensure that nuclear testing is effectively halted. It fails to understand why the Soviet Union considers that these same controls which are strictly limited in scope to fit technical and organizational requirements would jeopardize its national security.
4. In an effort to achieve a basis for final agreement at the earliest possible time, the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom have made numerous proposals designed to accommodate Soviet positions on international inspection and control. In many cases these proposals have met the Soviet position completely. Yet the reaction of the Soviet Government to our efforts to narrow the gap between the two sides has been to create new obstacles to agreement and, lately, to propose that a treaty banning nuclear weapon tests should await agreement on, and perhaps indeed implementation of, general and complete disarmament.

5. The United States stands ready to negotiate a general disarmament agreement as rapidly as this can be done. It is clear that an immediate agreement to end nuclear weapons tests would aid in the achievement of such a disarmament agreement and equally clear that failure to reach agreement on a test ban would in all likelihood hinder efforts to conclude swiftly an accord on disarmament. The fact that the Soviet Union resists so strenuously the limited control measures required by a nuclear test ban treaty can only cause grave concern for the possibilities of achieving effectively controlled disarmament.

6. This contrast between the attitudes of the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, on the one hand, and the Soviet Government, on the other, has been and is being brought into sharp relief in the conference proceedings on the question of how the control system should be managed and directed.

7. An issue which the Soviet Government had long described as one of the most important facing the conference was the issue of the composition of the Control Commission. The United States and the United Kingdom have agreed to equality of representation with the Soviet Union on this supreme supervising organ of the control system. There would be four representatives from each of the two sides and three neutral representatives. The Soviet Union and its allies would participate directly in the Control Commission in its task of setting the guidelines for operation of the control system and maintaining supervision over it.

8. Despite this significant move, which gave the Soviet Union an equal voice with the United States and the United Kingdom in guiding the affairs of the control system, the Soviet Union demanded still greater powers to impose its will on the control organization. Retreating from an agreed provision of the treaty, the Soviet Union has unfortunately chosen to advance the proposal that day-to-day administrative and executive authority over the international control system be exercised by a three-man administrative council. This council, on which each of the two nuclear sides and non-associated States would be represented, could take action only by unanimous consent so that the implementation of both the decisions of the Control Commission and the provisions of the treaty itself could be freely frustrated or vetoed. The effect of this proposal would be the paralysis of the entire control organization and would surely make a mockery of effective international inspection.

9. It cannot be argued that this new Soviet proposal was necessary to protect Soviet security interests. Under agreed provisions of the treaty, the Soviet Union has received ample assurance that administration of the control system will be competent and impartial. The Administrator is made accountable to the policy-making Control Commission, and works under its continuous supervision. His appointment and the appointment of his first deputy requires the concurring vote of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has the right to nominate two deputy Administrators. The staff of the control organization is appropriately divided so as to provide equality between the two nuclear sides. Decisions as to the total amount of each annual budget, and the decisions as to amendment of the treaty, require the concurring vote of the Soviet Union. From this it is abundantly clear that concern over the Administrator's activities could not have been the motivating cause for this Soviet demand for a tripartite administrative council.

10. In an attempted justification for its tripartite administrative council proposal, the Soviet Government states that "there is no one person who can live in a society and not be influenced by one or another ideology and by mutual relations which exist between different groups within society. Neutral countries exist, but there are not and cannot be neutral people".

11. The Government of the United States believes that this rejection of the idea of an international civil servant acting impartially under guidance from international policy-making organs constitutes nothing less than an attack upon the executive capacity of any international organization for effective action. There are, of course, many people who are capable of exercising independent judgement in behalf of the international community; the whole history of international organizations bears witness to this fact. The United States rejects this Soviet contention categorically and is convinced that nations which do not wish to submit to the domination of great powers will also reject it.

12. This is a striking example of the Soviet Union's attempt to sabotage the Geneva nuclear test ban negotiations. It is not the only example, however, as was pointed out in the 17 June note of the United States Government. The Soviet refusal to accept more than three on-site inspections a year; the demand that

international control posts and inspection teams in Soviet territory be headed by Soviet nationals; the Soviet insistence on criteria for on-site inspection which would seldom, if ever, permit an on-site inspection to be made regardless of how suspicious a detected event might be - all these are examples of the Soviet resistance to negotiating an effective nuclear test ban agreement in Geneva.

13. For its part, the United States Government must express its profound regret at the turn of events that has taken place in the test ban conference. The United States still regards the reaching of an agreement as a prime objective of its national policy. It repeats its readiness to negotiate in a reasonable spirit with the Soviet Government on the terms of a test ban treaty. Despite the lateness of the hour, the United States believes that the Soviet Government cannot be insensible to the demands of millions of people everywhere that agreement be reached urgently to ban nuclear weapons tests under effective control.

14. A binding treaty with effective controls would guarantee against hazards involved in testing; it would be a first step along the road towards accord on disarmament and towards the improvement of East-West relations; and it would inhibit the spread of nuclear weapons manufacturing capability. The prize we seek is too valuable and the consequences of our failure to win it are too serious to permit the luxury of indulging in narrow and temporary national interests. The United States Government makes common cause with all humanity when it urges the Soviet Government to allow the negotiators at Geneva to get on with their work.
