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Four Power Conference, Geneva

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Text of a letter to President of USA, D. Eisenhower

- from Premier of USSR, Bulgaria

## UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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### NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS

Following is the text of a letter to President Eisenhower  
from Premier Bulganin:

"Dear Mr. President:

"I feel I must sincerely and frankly exchange opinions with you on a subject which at the present time has acquired particular importance. I have in mind the question which is being discussed now by our representatives in the Subcommittee of the UN Disarmament Commission.

"In the course of our memorable meetings in Geneva we agreed to work jointly for elaboration of an acceptable system of disarmament. When we approved directives to our Minister of Foreign Affairs on this score, I thought a great deal had been accomplished. Now the representatives of our countries, guided by these directives and taking into account in their work the opinions and proposals put forth by the heads of the four governments in Geneva, can and must achieve definite progress.

"I and my colleagues thought that even at the very beginning of their work our representatives would be able to reach general agreement on those basic questions on which our viewpoints either coincided or had already appreciably approached each other. I have in mind first of all the question of the levels of armed forces of the five great powers, the question of dates for introducing into force the prohibition of atomic weapons, and the question of international control. In this manner there would be created a solid foundation for further work during which it would be possible to make more precise all the details of the necessary agreements concerning the working out of an acceptable system of disarmament.

"However, the first weeks of the work of the Subcommittee so far have not yet produced those results for which you and I were fully entitled to hope, and I must frankly say that the delay is occasioned to a considerable degree by the fact that the members of the Subcommittee so far do not know the position of the representative of the United States with regard to those provisions which we had all the grounds to consider as agreed. As is known, the representative of the United States completely put aside the questions of reduction of the armed forces, of the armament and prohibition of atomic weapons, having expressed the desire to discuss first of all and mainly your proposal concerning the exchange of military information between the USSR and the USA as well as of the mutual exchange of aerial photography of the territories of both countries. In this manner the impression is left that the entire problem of disarmament is being confined by him to these proposals. I think to put the question in this manner would not satisfy the aspiration of peoples, even though I fully recognize the importance of the proposals introduced by you in Geneva.

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"However, since I and my colleagues have received the above-mentioned impression, I consider it my duty once more to share with you, esteemed Mr. President, certain primary considerations.

"We feel that the main problem for us is to use further efforts to look for ways which would permit us to move the problem of disarmament away from dead center, which problem has vital importance for the peoples of the USSR and the USA as well as of peoples of the entire world.

"In connection with this allow me to touch upon the proposals put forward by you in Geneva. We regard these proposals as testimony of your sincere desire to find a way to settle the important problem of the international control and inspection and to contribute personally to general efforts for the normalization of international relations.

"Upon our return from Geneva we with all carefulness have studied your proposal of July 21 which was introduced on August 31 by Mr. Stassen into the Disarmament Subcommittee. In the course of this study several questions have arisen about which I would like to express to you my thoughts.

"First of all, about the mutual exchange by the United States of America and the Soviet Union of information concerning their armed forces and armaments.

"In principle, we have no objections to this proposal. I think that at a definite stage the exchange of such information between states is necessary. It would be better, however, if such information concerning armaments were submitted by all states, and not only by the US and the USSR, to the international organ of control and inspection, concerning the creation of which we should reach an agreement. In order to avoid misunderstandings, it is self-evident that information on all kinds of armaments, conventional as well as nuclear, must be submitted in order to avoid misunderstanding. If these considerations are valid, we should carefully discuss exactly when this full information on armaments of states should be presented and first of all information concerning the armaments of great powers.

"It is self-evident that the submission of the above-mentioned information to an international control organ would become significant only if agreement is achieved on the reduction of armaments and on taking measures for the prohibition of atomic weapons.

"It seems to me that the problem of the creation of an international control organ which would satisfy the requirements of the problems of disarmament should be considered in indissoluble unity with decisions for putting into effect a plan for gradual disarmament. At the same time it is necessary to keep sight of the fact that achievement of a really valuable exchange of the military information will become really effective to the degree that mutual trust among states is strengthened.

"Now I would also like to express my opinion about the problem of aerial photography.

"I do not doubt that when you introduced your proposal for photographing from the air the territories of our two countries, you were guided by a legitimate desire to create confidence that neither of our two countries would be subjected to attack by the other.

"However, let us be frank to the end. Under present international conditions both our countries are not acting singly. The United States of America, as is known, heads all military groupings which exist in the West and in the East, and what is more their armed forces are stationed not only on American territory; they are also stationed in England, West Germany, Italy, France, Spain, North Africa, Greece, Turkey, in several countries of the Near and Middle East, in Japan, or Taiwan, in the Philippines, etc.

"To this should be added the fact that the armed forces of several states are organically connected with the military forces of the United States through inclusion under a single command.

"Under these conditions, the Soviet Union on its side has united militarily with several allied states.

"It is impossible not to see that the proposal introduced by you completely omits from consideration armed forces and military installations which are outside the area of the United States and the Soviet Union.

"And yet it is perfectly self-evident that aerial photographing should also be extended to all armed forces and military installations located on the territories of those other states.

"This presents an entirely new problem: would the governments of such states permit their sovereign territory to be photographed from the air by foreign aircraft?

"All this shows that the problem of aerial photography is not a question which, under present conditions, would lead to effective progress towards insuring security of states and successful accomplishment of disarmament.

"This conclusion is suggested by the fact that your proposal, unfortunately does not mention the necessity for reduction of armaments and prohibition of atomic weapons.

"It is therefore natural that people should ask more and more often what the proposal for aerial photography and the collecting of such information will really do to end the arms race. If such a proposal does not promote the ending of the arms race, then it means that it does not remove the threat of a new war. It does not lighten the burden which the peoples are bearing in connection with this arms race. Would such a proposal satisfy the expectations of our peoples and that of all countries?

"Finally, it is impossible not to stop and think about what would happen if we occupy ourselves with the questions of aerial photography and the exchange of military information without taking effective measures for reduction of armaments and prohibition of atomic weapons.

"I have apprehensions which I cannot help but share with you. Would not such a situation lead to the weakening of vigilance towards the still existing threat of violation of the peace generated by the arms race?

"My remarks do not at all mean that we cannot achieve an agreement on important aspects of the disarmament problem. I would like to call your attention to the fact that on very substantial aspects of this problem our position has become so close to each other's that we should be able to reach a definite agreement.

"Let us take such a question as the establishment of levels of armed forces for the great powers.

"It is generally recognized that this is a question of great importance. Originally, the idea of establishing levels to which armed forces of the big five should be reduced, as is known, was put forth by your government together with the governments of Great Britain and France in 1952. In the interest of achieving general agreement on this matter, which is so important for the problem of disarmament, we decided to adopt this joint

proposal of the US, England and France, as a basis for discussion. Consequently we have a common point of view on this question. It is very important for us to arrive at agreement on this point.

"On the question of atomic weapons, we must remember that at the present, when the greatest armies of the world have at their disposal such means of mass destruction as atomic and hydrogen weapons, it is impossible, of course, to talk about disarmament without touching on this important subject. Therefore, we have always attached paramount importance to the problem of prohibition of atomic weapons. In the discussion of this problem, one of the substantial subjects of disagreement was the question of dates when the prohibition against the use of atomic weapons would go into force. In our desire to bring the opposition positions closer and to thereby facilitate and expedite the achievement of agreement on this subject, we agreed to accept the dates for putting into force the prohibition on the use of atomic weapons which were proposed by the representatives of England and France in the Subcommittee of the UN Commission on Disarmament in London in April 1955.

"I think you will agree that this proposal concerning the stage at which prohibition against the use of atomic weapons would come into force, as proposed by England and France, and accepted by the Soviet Union, satisfies our common interests.

"It would be desirable - and I think completely feasible - to reach an agreement also on this question.

"It also seems expedient for us to reach agreement at this time on putting into effect several measures designed to prevent sudden attack by one state on another. We feel that this measure would be in accord with the interests of maintaining peace and security of nations and in this respect it would be possible to reach agreement also concerning the form of control suitable to the above-mentioned problem.

"You, Mr. President, as a military man, know from your own experience that the modern war requires drawing into military action armies of many millions and an enormous quantity of technical combat equipment. In this connection great importance has now been acquired by the definite locations where concentration of large military groups can take place and whose armaments would include all this technical combat equipment. The system of control proposed by us, namely the creation of control posts in large ports, at railroad junctions, on automobile highways and at airfields, is designed to prevent dangerous concentrations of troops and combat equipment on large scale and thereby remove the possibility of sudden attack by one country against another. Establishment of such posts would be an important step towards relaxation of international tension and the establishment of trust among states.

"In my opinion our proposal concerning control posts has the advantage that it provides a definite guarantee against a sudden attack by one state against another. I think you will agree that the proposals introduced by us concerning levels of armed forces, the dates for coming into effect of the prohibition of nuclear weapons and for the establishment of control posts can promote the reduction of tension in the international relations and strengthening of peace. I do not see, therefore, any reasons why we couldn't arrange to reach agreement on these questions. Such joint decisions of the four powers would have tremendous importance because they would put into the hearts of millions of people the assurance that the disarmament is fully realizable and that real steps are being taken in this direction. An agreement on these questions would open the way towards solution of other questions which concern the problem of disarmament. It would encourage the strengthening of that atmosphere of cooperation and mutual understanding which we initiated at Geneva, and it would create favorable conditions to put into practice a broader program of disarmament and control over this disarmament.

"In presenting ideas to you, Mr. President, I am inspired by the sincere desire to achieve through a frank exchange of opinions on the problem of disarmament better mutual understanding which may facilitate reaching agreed decisions on this most important problem.

"In as much as the solution of these questions depends mainly on the four great powers who participated in the Geneva Conference, I have taken the liberty of sending copies of this letter to Mr. Eden and Mr. Faure and hope that you will not misunderstand this action.

"I hope soon to receive your ideas on the questions touched upon in this letter.

"With sincere respect, N. Bulganin."

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