DISARMAMENT AND THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE FULFILMENT OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1378 (XIV) OF 20 NOVEMBER 1959 ON THE QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 23 November 1960 from the Chairman of the Delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the fifteenth session of the General Assembly addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to attach herewith the replies to questions concerning disarmament given by Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, to the newspaper Pravda and published on 23 November 1960.

I should be grateful if you would have these replies issued as an official United Nations document and circulated to the delegations to the General Assembly.

(Signed) V. ZORIN
Chairman of the delegation of the USSR to the fifteenth session of the United Nations General Assembly
REPLIES BY MR. N.S. KRUSHCHEV, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE USSR, TO QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE EDITOR OF THE NEWSPAPER PRAVDA

The Editor of the newspaper Pravda submitted to Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, questions concerning the problem of general and complete disarmament and control over its implementation. The questions submitted by the newspaper Pravda and Mr. N.S. Khrushchev's replies are given below.

Question: In several foreign countries speculation continues with regard to the Soviet Union's position on the problem of disarmament and control. How do you evaluate the attitudes of the Western Powers towards the Soviet Union's proposals concerning these matters?

Answer: At the fifteenth session of the United Nations General Assembly and after my return to Moscow it was repeatedly indicated by the Soviet Government that the Soviet Union would be ready to accept the Western Powers' proposals on international control over the implementation of disarmament measures if the Western Powers for their part would agree to general and complete disarmament. I might recall that in the General Assembly I stated the following: If a decision is adopted on general and complete disarmament, on the destruction of weapons, we shall then agree to any kind of control. In that event we shall be prepared to believe even the most rabid haters of Communism and socialism. Let them work out their proposals on control. We shall accept those control proposals.

The Soviet Union attaches great importance to effective international control over the fulfilment of agreed obligations with respect to general and complete disarmament. Trust and check - that is a good rule not only in domestic but also in international affairs and the Soviet Union knows from its own experience that the execution of agreements with capitalist States calls for careful checking, especially in such a matter as disarmament. That is why we are at least as interested as other countries in the establishment of strict international control. The Soviet Union wishes to be able to have confidence that the other adherents to the agreement will fulfil their obligations with respect to general and complete disarmament as conscientiously as it will itself. Accordingly the "Basic provisions of a treaty on general and complete disarmament" submitted by us set forth detailed control provisions concerning every disarmament measure.

/...
Thorough and comprehensive international control over disarmament is a guarantee that no country will be able to retain or secretly produce any kind of weapon. That is essential, for no State would give up its defensive capacity unless others did likewise. We start from the premise that in carrying out the disarmament programme no country or group of countries should enjoy any advantages or privileges which would jeopardize the security of other countries.

We expected leading statesmen in the West to show at least a minimum of good faith and correctly interpret the Soviet Union's position with regard to the question of control over disarmament; but that was not the case. The leading statesmen of the Western Powers continue to distort our position on this matter, acting as though nothing had happened, as though no proposals had been submitted by the Soviet Union. They persist in talking about what they call the vagueness of the Soviet position on the control question and say that the USSR underestimates the importance of control. The position of Mr. Macmillan, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, is particularly to be noted in this connexion. In one of his recent speeches Mr. Macmillan, completely ignoring the Soviet Union's proposals, went so far as to assert that the Soviet Union has an aversion to inspection, that it is trying to evade the establishment of control in order to conceal its military might.

Such tendentious statements can only evoke surprise. Obviously the aversion to disarmament of the leading statesmen of the North Atlantic military bloc is so strong that they are ready to attribute anything to the Soviet Union if only they can evade genuine disarmament.

To remove any shadow of doubt concerning the Soviet Government's position, I repeat once more that we are ready to consider any proposals that the Western Powers may wish to submit on control over general and complete disarmament. But to that end agreement must be reached on disarmament and on pursuing an honest policy in that regard rather than a policy of deceiving the peoples. We shall willingly study and make use of any proposals that may be submitted, with a view to arriving at a decision capable of ensuring general and complete disarmament under the strictest international control.
Question: What is your opinion of the draft resolutions on disarmament put forward by the Western Powers at the United Nations General Assembly?

Answer: A number of draft resolutions on disarmament have been submitted by the Western Powers at the current session of the General Assembly, including one by the United States, the United Kingdom and Italy, one by the United Kingdom and one by Canada.

What can be said about these drafts?

They afford striking evidence that the Governments of the Western Powers still do not wish to seek a solution of disarmament problems in a businesslike way that would reflect full awareness of their responsibility towards the people of the world. Let us take, for example, the draft resolution submitted by the United States, the United Kingdom and Italy. The sponsors of this draft are silent about the most essential point, namely, how to carry out general and complete disarmament, confining themselves to some nebulous measures which they claim would lead to general and complete disarmament. In reality there is not a word about genuine disarmament in this draft resolution.

Surely there can be no real expectation that general and complete disarmament will be achieved on the basis of a draft which has not a word to say about the elimination of military bases maintained by States in the Territories of other States, about the need for the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction, about when and over how long a period disarmament should be carried out. The sole purpose of the Western draft resolution is to establish control without disarmament, that is, control over armaments, which was openly advocated by President Eisenhower in his speech at the current session of the United Nations General Assembly.

To take such a stand is the height of futility. No one will agree to control without disarmament. The Governments of the Western Powers are perfectly well aware of this but they do not wish to say so openly and frankly to their peoples.

The unwillingness of the Western Powers to agree to disarmament is also reflected in the United Kingdom draft resolution. That text does not contain the slightest reference to the need for carrying out any disarmament measures at all. It provides merely for the establishment of a committee of experts to examine problems of control. When proposals to establish various committees of experts are made wholly without reference to genuine disarmament measures it will be
apparent even to the most unsophisticated that the Western Powers are seeking as before to drown the problem of disarmament in endless and futile wordmongering.

While the useless wordmongering goes on in the proposed committee, while the Western experts continue to find subterfuges for protracting the discussion, the arms race will increase in intensity. That is precisely what occurred in the day of the League of Nations and there is not the slightest shred of hope that if this proposal is adopted matters will turn out differently, in view of the policy of sabotaging disarmament that the Western Powers are pursuing. As experience has shown, endless negotiations are for them a smokescreen to conceal their policy of an arms race.

Not very different from the United Kingdom draft resolution is the Canadian draft, which proposes the establishment of yet another committee that it calls an "ad hoc committee". This committee is given the task of studying the voluminous records of speeches and documents of all kinds on disarmament matters with which the United Nations archives are crammed. And this "work" is presented as a means of finding a way to "the resumption of serious negotiations ... and the attainment of the goal of general and complete disarmament".

The Canadian proposal is not even remotely concerned with genuine disarmament. It testifies most frankly to the fact that the Governments of the NATO countries, against the will of their peoples, refuse to agree to disarmament. For the vital matter of disarmament they wish to substitute a fuss and bother with archives!

All the drafts of the Western Powers make it clear that they would like to replace control over disarmament by supervision of armaments; but supervision, surely, even if it is called control and inspection of armaments, would in no way diminish the danger of a war breaking out. What in fact does mere control over armaments mean? It means that armaments will be retained. But it is clear to everyone that if armaments are retained, they will continue to be improved and stockpiled; in other words, the arms race will go on. In such circumstances the aggressive forces of certain Western Powers, after reconnoitring the defences of other States, might choose a suitable moment to strike and launch an aggressive attack. This would, of course, be suicidal on their part, but they would plunge the world into the abyss of war. When rockets and aircraft are kept constantly in combat readiness, no one, no controllers, will be able to stop the aggressors if they wish to start a war. In that event war may become a reality and bring down dreadful calamities and suffering upon States and peoples.

/...
The Government of the USSR considers it its most important task to rid the peoples of the threat of war and the heavy burden of the arms race. This aim can be achieved by carrying out general and complete disarmament under strict international control.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union has had and will have no part in working out a system of control over armaments as distinct from disarmament, as it does not wish to take part in deceiving the peoples.

The peoples must call to order the statesmen who are sabotaging disarmament. No one, no Government has the right to engage in a perilous gamble with disarmament and to expose the fate of the peoples, the fate of the world, to the terrible danger of nuclear war.

**Question:** What at the present time is the attitude of the Western Powers to the Soviet Government's proposal to broaden the membership of the Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee?

**Answer:** Our position on this question has been stated repeatedly. As is known, the Soviet Union was compelled to discontinue its participation in the work of the Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee because of the fruitlessness of that work. At the fifteenth session of the United Nations General Assembly the Soviet Union put forward a proposal to expand the membership of that Committee to fifteen by including in it, on a basis of equality, representatives of India, Indonesia, the United Arab Republic, Ghana and Mexico. Broadening the membership of the Committee in this way would enable the interests of the three groups of States Members of Western military blocs, Socialist States and neutralist States to be represented in it and would give fresh impetus to the continuation and successful conclusion of the negotiations on general and complete disarmament, a matter of vital concern to all peoples.

Why are the Western Powers opposed to broadening the membership of the Committee by the inclusion of neutralist countries? Because, of course, they are afraid to appear openly before world public opinion in the role of saboteurs of disarmament. They are afraid that the representatives of the neutralist countries will see with their own eyes who is in favour of disarmament and who is preventing the solution of this problem.

By objecting to the broadening of the Committee's membership, the Western Powers are trying to have the negotiations pushed back into that same Committee,
which has demonstrated its inability to function because of the obstructionism of those Powers.

Moreover, they would like this Committee to proceed as it did before, without rudder or sails, without clearly defined directives, without a time-limit being set for its work. We would then, however, have a broken record, repeating endlessly. People would sit in the Committee, wall themselves off from the public and continue a futile discussion, while the cause of disarmament stood still. In such circumstances, not even our grandchildren would get positive results from the Committee's work.

The Soviet Union insists on the expansion of the Disarmament Committee's membership and sincerely hopes that this will make it possible to break the deadlock on the negotiations on general and complete disarmament.

We, on our side, have done and will continue to do everything possible to remove the disarmament negotiations from the sphere of fruitless discussion, to bring to an end the rivalry in the field of the arms race, to eliminate weapons and armies and to create a world without weapons, a world without wars.

-----