



LETTER DATED 12 SEPTEMBER 1961 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA, CEYLON, CYPRUS, FEDERATION OF MALAYA, GHANA, INDIA, NEW ZEALAND, NIGERIA, PAKISTAN AND THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

We have the honour, on instructions from our respective Governments, to transmit to you the statement on disarmament which was agreed between the Prime Ministers of these Commonwealth Governments and of South Africa (at the time a member of the Commonwealth) at their meeting in London on 17 March 1961. We should be grateful if this letter and its enclosure could be circulated for the information of all Members of the United Nations as a document of the General Assembly and of the Disarmament Commission.

<p>(Signed) J. PLIMSOLL C.S.A. RITCHIE G. MALALASEKERA A. AKYAMAC N.A. KAMIL</p> <p>Alex QUAISON-SACKEY C.S. JHA M. NORRISH Alhaji Muhammad NGILERUMA Zafrulla KHAN Patrick DEAN</p>	<p>Permanent Representative of Australia Permanent Representative of Canada Permanent Representative of Ceylon for Permanent Representative of Cyprus Permanent Representative of Federation of Malaya Permanent Representative of Ghana Permanent Representative of India for Permanent Representative of New Zealand Permanent Representative of Nigeria Permanent Representative of Pakistan Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</p>
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STATEMENT ON DISARMAMENT

agreed by Commonwealth Prime Ministers

17 March 1961

Aim

1. The aim must be to achieve total world-wide disarmament, subject to effective inspection and control.
2. In view of the slaughter and destruction experienced in so-called "conventional" wars and of the difficulty of preventing a conventional war, once started, from developing into a nuclear war, our aim must be nothing less than the complete abolition of the means of waging war of any kind.

Principles

3. An agreement for this purpose should be negotiated as soon as possible, on the basis of the following principles -
 - (a) All national armed forces, and armaments must be reduced to the levels agreed to be necessary for ^{internal} international security.
 - (b) Once started, the process of disarmament should be continued without interruption until it is completed, subject to verification at each stage that all parties are duly carrying out their undertakings.
 - (c) The elimination of nuclear and conventional armaments must be so phased that at no stage will any country or group of countries obtain a significant military advantage.
 - (d) In respect of each phase there should be established, by agreement, effective machinery of inspection, which should come into operation simultaneously with the phase of disarmament to which it relates.
 - (e) Disarmament should be carried out as rapidly as possible in progressive stages, within specified periods of time.
 - (f) At the appropriate stage, a substantial and adequately armed military force should be established, to prevent aggression and enforce observance of the disarmament agreement; and an international authority should be created, in association with the United Nations, to control this force and to ensure that it is not used for any purpose inconsistent with the Charter.

4. On the basis of the above principles, it should be possible, given goodwill on both sides, to reconcile the present differences of approach between the different plans put forward.

Negotiations

5. The principal military Powers should resume direct negotiations without delay in close contact with the United Nations, which is responsible for disarmament under the Charter. Since peace is the concern of the whole world, other nations should also be associated with the disarmament negotiations, either directly or through some special machinery to be set up by the United Nations, or by both means.

6. Side by side with the political negotiations, experts should start working out the details of the inspection systems required for the measures of disarmament applicable to each stage, in accordance with the practice adopted at the Geneva Nuclear Tests Conference.

7. Every effort should be made to secure rapid agreement to the permanent banning of nuclear weapons tests by all nations and to arrangements for verifying the observance of the agreement. Such an agreement is urgent, since otherwise further countries may soon become nuclear Powers, which would increase the danger of war and further complicate the problem of disarmament. Moreover, an agreement on nuclear tests, apart from its direct advantages, would provide a powerful psychological impetus to agreement over the wider field of disarmament.

8. Disarmament without inspection would be as unacceptable as inspection without disarmament. Disarmament and inspection are integral parts of the same question and must be negotiated together; and both must be made as complete and effective as is humanly possible. It must, however, be recognized that no safeguards can provide 100 per cent protection against error or treachery. Nevertheless, the risks involved in the process of disarmament must be balanced against the risks involved in the continuance of the arms race.

9. It is arguable whether the arms race is the cause or the result of distrust between nations. But it is clear that the problems of disarmament and international confidence are closely linked. Therefore, while striving for the abolition of armaments, all nations must actively endeavour to reduce tension by helping to remove other causes of friction and suspicion.