

UNITED NATIONS

DISARMAMENT  
COMMISSION



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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

CORRIGENDUM TO THE LETTER DATED 8 APRIL 1954 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF  
INDIA TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Replace paragraphs 5 and 6 by the following:

5. The Government of India also consider that informed world opinion as to the known and unknown but probable effects and implications of the explosions of these weapons of mass destruction are an important and perhaps a decisive factor in the solution of the problems to which the Commission is addressing itself.
6. The Government of India make these proposals and request their immediate consideration by the Disarmament Commission in the sincere belief and the earnest hope that they will make a useful beginning in the fulfilment of the earnest desire which the General Assembly affirmed last year in its Resolution No. 715 (VIII) Clause I.

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25 May 54  
25 May 54

UNITED NATIONS

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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 8 APRIL 1954 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ENCLOSED EXTRACTS FROM STATEMENT MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA IN THE HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE ON 2 APRIL 1954 ON THE SUBJECT OF THE HYDROGEN BOMB

Sir,

1. I am directed by the Government of India to request you to place before the Disarmament Commission and its special sub-committee the views of the Government of India on the hydrogen bomb contained in a statement in Parliament on the 2nd April 1954 by the Prime Minister of India.
2. This statement, a copy of which is enclosed for your information and that of the Commission, sets out the approach and the concern of the Government of India in respect of the problem, and makes certain proposals. The Government of India requests that these proposals may be examined by the Commission. They believe that these proposals are practical and capable of application and without prejudice to any of the issues in regard to control, inspection, prohibition, stockpiling etc., which the Commission is seeking to resolve.
3. The Government of India further submits with confidence that the widespread concern the world over and the various suggestions made, should presently receive active study and consideration by the Commission.
4. The people and Government of India are disturbed and moved by the after-effects of the hydrogen bomb explosions on the people of Japan, which they submit, deserve special consideration of the Commission. Japan is not represented at the United Nations and it is not one of the parties principally concerned in this problem.
5. The Government of India also consider informed world opinion as to known and unknown but probable effects and particular implications of the explosion of these weapons of mass destruction are an important and perhaps a decisive factor in the solution of the problem to which the Commission is addressing itself.

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6. The Government of India makes these proposals and requests their immediate consideration by the Disarmament Commission in the sincere belief and the earnest hope that they will make a useful beginning in the fulfilment of the earnest desire which the General Assembly affirmed last year in its Resolution No. 715(VIII) Clause I.

7. The Government of India are fully aware that any effective consideration and solution of this problem can be reached only by the Powers principally concerned, and by agreement among them. In the crisis that humanity faces and where the issue is the future of mankind, they have ventured in all humility to make this contribution to the collective thinking and action in which those in whom responsibility has been vested by the United Nations are presently engaged.

8. I request that this communication and its annexure may be circulated to the members of the Disarmament Commission as a United Nations document.

Please accept, Excellency, . . . etc.

(Rajeshwar Dayal)

Permanent Representative of India to the  
United Nations.

EXTRACTS FROM STATEMENT MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER  
OF INDIA IN THE HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE ON 2 APRIL 1954  
ON THE SUBJECT OF THE HYDROGEN BOMB

"The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics we are told possess this weapon and each of these countries has during the last two years effected test explosions, unleashing impacts which in every respect were far beyond those of any weapons of destruction known to man.

"A further and more powerful explosion than the one of 1st of March has been effected by the United States and more are reported to have been scheduled to take place.

"We know little more about the hydrogen bomb and its disastrous and horrible consequences than have appeared in the press or are otherwise matters of general knowledge or speculation. But even what we do know, and the very fact that the full facts of the effects of these explosions do not appear to be known or are ascertainable with any certainty even by scientists, points to certain conclusions. A new weapon of unprecedented power, both in volume and intensity, with unascertained and probably unascertainable range of destructive potential in respect to time and space, that is, both as regards the duration and extent of the consequences, is being tested, unleashing its massive power for use as a weapon of war. We know that its use threatens the existence of man and civilization as we know it. We are told there is no effective protection against the hydrogen bomb and that millions of people may be exterminated by a single explosion and many more injured and perhaps still many more condemned to slow death or to live under the shadow of the fear of disease and death.

"These are horrible prospects and affect us nations and peoples everywhere, whether we are involved in wars or power blocs or not. From diverse sides and parts of the world have come pronouncements which point to the dread features and ominous prospects of the hydrogen bomb era."

The Prime Minister then referred, in this connexion, to statements made by Professor Albert Einstein, Dr. Greenhead of Cincinnati University, Professor Martin, Defence and Scientific Adviser to the Government of Australia, Mr. Lester Pearson, Canadian Minister for External Affairs, and Mr. Malenkov, Soviet Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Nehru said: "There can be little doubt about the deep and widespread concern in the world, particularly among peoples, about these weapons and their dreadful consequences. But concern is not enough. Fear and dread do not lead to constructive thought or effective courses of action. Panic is no remedy against disaster of any kind, present or potential.

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"Mankind has to awaken itself to reality and face the situation with determination and assert itself to avert calamity.

"The general position of this country in this matter has been repeatedly stated and placed beyond all doubt. It is up to us to pursue as best as we can the objective we seek.

"We have maintained that nuclear (including thermonuclear), chemical and biological (bacterial) knowledge and power should not be used to forge these weapons of mass destruction. We have advocated the prohibition of such weapons by common consent and immediately by agreement amongst those concerned, which latter is at present the only effective way to bring about their abandonment.

"The House will no doubt recall the successive attempts made by us at the United Nations to secure the adoption of this view and approach."

Mr. Nehru then read out amendments moved by Indian delegates to a resolution on disarmament at the last session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1953.

The Prime Minister continued: "The House is aware that this latter suggestion has lately engaged the attention of the powers principally concerned at Berlin and elsewhere and talks have taken place and, so far as we know, are continuing.

"Time, however, appears to challenge us. Destruction threatens to catch us up if not to overtake us on its march to its sinister goal. We must seek to arrest it and avert the dire end it threatens.

"The Government proposes to continue to give its closest and continuous consideration to such steps as it can take in appropriate places and contexts in pursuit of our approach and common objective.

"I have stated publicly as our view that these experiments, which may have served their one and only useful purpose, namely to expose the nature of the horror and the tragedy, even though only partly, should cease. I repeat that to be our considered position and it is our hope this view and the great concern it reflects and which is world-wide, will evoke adequate and timely responses.

"Pending progress towards some solution, full or partial, in respect of prohibition and elimination of these weapons of mass destruction, which the General Assembly has affirmed as its earnest desire, the Government would consider among the steps to be taken, now and forthwith, the following:

(1) Some sort of what may be called 'standstill agreement' in respect, at least, of these actual explosions, even if arrangements about the discontinuance of production and stockpiling must await more substantial agreements among those principally concerned.

(2) Full publicity by those principally concerned in the production of these weapons and by the United Nations of the extent of destructive power and known effects of these weapons, and also adequate indication of the extent of unknown but probable effects. Informed world public opinion is in our view a most effective factor in bringing about the results we desire.

(3) Immediate (and continuing) private meetings of the sub-committee of the Disarmament Commission to consider the 'standstill' proposal which I have just mentioned, pending decisions on prohibitions and controls, etc., to which the Disarmament Commission is asked by the General Assembly to address itself.

(4) Active steps by the states and peoples of the world, who, though not directly concerned with the production of these weapons, are very much concerned with the possible use of them, and at present by these experiments and their effects. They would, I venture to hope, express their concern and add their voices and influence in as effective a manner as possible to arrest the progress of this destructive potential which menaces all alike.

"The Government of India will use its best efforts in pursuit of these objectives.

"I would conclude with an expression of sympathy which this House and this country feel towards the victims of the recent explosions, Japanese fishermen and others, and to the people of Japan to whom it has brought much dread and concern by way of direct effects and by fear of food contamination.

"The open ocean appears no longer open, except in that those who sail on it for fishing or other legitimate purposes take greater and unknown risks caused by these explosions. It is of great concern to us that Asia and her peoples appear to be always nearer these occurrences and experiments and their fearsome consequences, actual and potential.

"We do not yet know fully whether the continuing effects of these explosions are carried only by the media of air and water, or whether they subsist in other strata of nature, and know how long their effects persist or whether they set up some sort of chain reaction, at which some have already hinted.

"We must endeavour with faith and hope to promote all efforts that seek to bring to a halt this drift to what appears to be the menace of total destruction."

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