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*Note du chef de la Direction du désarmement  
pour le sous-secrétaire d'État adjoint aux Affaires extérieures*

*Memorandum from Head, Disarmament Division,  
to Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs*

CONFIDENTIAL. CANADIAN EYES ONLY.

[Ottawa], December 5, 1962

ENDC – CESSATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTS

The following paragraphs review some questions relating to the above subject which we would like to have an opportunity to discuss with you preparatory to the drafting of further instructions for the Disarmament Delegation.

2. The United States view (apparently shared by the British), as it emerges from reports of Western Four discussions and conversations in capitals, seems to be that the time is not right now for a move on a test ban; that the Cuban problem remains to be settled and assessments of its implications need to be completed; and that the USSR is unsure of its position on nuclear tests and is still thinking things over. As the Disarmament Delegation has reported, the delegations of the nuclear powers at Geneva “might be under some general instructions to maintain existing positions while a full assessment of the consequences of the Cuban crisis and of the Sino-Indian dispute on East-West relations is taking place in Moscow, Washington and London.” All this apparently indicates to our major allies, as our Embassy in Washington has put it in reporting an American official, that “in the circumstances it would be in the Western interest to exercise a degree of patience.”

3. What are the implications of this position for the test ban negotiations? There is to be a report to the General Assembly by December 10, i.e., in five days' time, and it will be virtually impossible to achieve any real progress by that date. Probably all we can expect is a report on the number of meetings held; perhaps a reference to some of the suggestions made by the neutrals (though this is doubtful because the Russians apparently disagree with them); and a statement that negotiations are continuing. As for the January 1 deadline for stopping tests there is also little ground for optimism – unless there is a significant change from the present position – that very much can be accomplished. There is already talk in the corridors (so the British here have told us) about a Christmas recess which may last throughout the holiday period, i.e., from about Friday, December 21 to Monday, January 7. This will leave only about two working weeks after the end of the present week in which to achieve some progress.

4. Where do we stand as a result? It is unlikely that we will be able to budge the USA from its stand on obligatory on-site inspections in the little time remaining, and, if we cannot, there is perhaps little point in putting forward any Canadian proposal publicly. On the other hand, it is difficult simply to sit tight, in view of the General Assembly resolution which called for action by January 1 either on a complete test ban or, “if against all hope” that were not possible, on a partial ban and an accompanying suspension of underground tests. Moreover, it is not yet clear what will be the neutrals' attitude. Will they be content to let the great powers carry the ball – or rather not carry it? Or will they become more concerned as time goes by and demand decisive action?