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*Le ministre de la Défense nationale  
au premier ministre*

*Minister of National Defence  
to Prime Minister*

CONFIDENTIAL

[Ottawa], October 26, 1962

My dear Prime Minister:

As you know there are two resolutions before the General Assembly dealing with the suspension of nuclear tests. The first is a USA/UK resolution calling for a comprehensive treaty with on-site inspection of a proportion of suspicious underground events, or, failing this, suspension without inspection of tests in the atmosphere, underwater and in outer space. The second resolution is the so-called neutral resolution which calls for, in effect, an uninspected moratorium upon all tests including underground ones. The latter is, of course, the Soviet position.

On 17 October, I wrote to the Minister of External Affairs recommending that Canada should not support the neutral resolution which had not then been formally tabled. My argument was based upon what I conceive to be the merits of the case and the nature of major Canadian national interests. Present methods of seismic detection do not permit one to distinguish between earthquakes and underground nuclear explosions. With regard to the possible strategic advantage which could be achieved by clandestine underground testing by the USSR, one cannot be quite so definite. However, the consensus of qualified experts is that an uninspected moratorium which would be respected by the USA and might not be respected by the USSR would involve definite risks to US security and therefore to Western security. This includes Canada since, like all other Western countries, we depend upon the US nuclear umbrella.

I cannot see that it would be in Canada's interests to place pressure upon the Americans to accept an agreement which would be contrary to the essential requirements of US security and therefore of Canadian security. This being so, I suggest that it is inadvisable to place a major strain upon our diplomatic credit in Washington at a time when important Canadian interests are at stake in relation to the European Economic Community and other matters. Recent events in Cuba have, of course, provided further evidence of what a Soviet promise is worth.

I have now received a reply from the Minister of External Affairs.† He points out that Canada has taken a strong and consistent stand that nuclear tests must be brought to a halt and that we have also supported a cut-off date of 1 January, 1963. Although he does not say this in so many words it seems evident that he considers that he is bound to vote in favour of the neutral resolution.

I am fully aware of the statements which have been made by the Minister of External Affairs and by General Burns upon his instructions. And in common with all members of the Government I have viewed with pride and admiration the work of the Minister of External Affairs on behalf of disarmament. Nevertheless, I am still very strongly of the opinion that it would be inadvisable and contrary to essential Canadian interests for Canada to support the neutral resolution at this time.

I think it is fair to say that by so doing we will not effectively serve the cause of disarmament since the USA and UK will not accept the neutral resolution regardless of how many votes it may get in the General Assembly. I do not believe that we are committed by previous statements to support the neutral resolution since we have also consistently