



UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



Distr.  
GENERAL

A/32/97  
2 June 1977  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

Thirty-second session  
Item 37 of the preliminary list\*

CONCLUSION OF A WORLD TREATY ON THE NON-USE OF FORCE IN  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Letter dated 1 June 1977 from the Permanent Representative  
of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic to the  
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the letter dated 31 May 1977 from Mr. A. E. Gurinovich, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Byelorussian SSR, concerning the question of the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter as an official document of the General Assembly under item 37 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) L. DOLGUCHITS  
Permanent Representative of the  
Byelorussian SSR to the United Nations

\* A/32/50/Rev.1.

ANNEX

Letter dated 31 May 1977 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs  
of the Byelorussian SSR addressed to the Secretary-General of  
the United Nations concerning the question of the conclusion  
of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international  
relations

At the thirty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly, the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR, like the overwhelming majority of other delegations, actively supported the proposal concerning the preparation and conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations (A/31/243). It based its support on the task of the United Nations as embodied in the Charter, to strengthen peace and international security, and on the importance, necessity and timeliness of further strengthening the general principle of the non-use of force proclaimed in the Charter. The question now arises of the need, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 31/9, to transform the principle of the non-use of force or threat of force into an effective law of international life which would be put into practice by all States and Governments.

It is well known that, although the principle of the non-use of force or threat of force was laid down in general terms in the United Nations Charter and a number of other bilateral and multilateral international treaties and agreements, numerous armed conflicts and clashes between States have taken place in the world during the post-war period - a situation which urgently requires all States to make renewed efforts for the strict application of that principle to the practice of international relations.

The progress achieved in the evolution of international relations during recent years and the success of the policy of détente have created sound conditions for considering and resolving the question of the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations. The existence of such a treaty would permit the further strengthening of the principle of peaceful coexistence of States with different social systems and would create new possibilities for States to curb the arms race and bring about disarmament, even general and complete disarmament, and would create a new international situation of lasting and guaranteed peace.

The Soviet draft Treaty is not a mere confirmation of the principle of the non-use of force embodied in the United Nations Charter; it develops and concretizes that principle, strengthening it by introducing a number of additional specific obligations for States parties to the treaty.

Reflecting the reality of the contemporary world and changes that have occurred in the world since the signing of the United Nations Charter - and, above all, the appearance of nuclear weapons and their growth into a vast complex of types and systems of contemporary weapons, the draft Treaty contains in article I the obligation to refrain from the "use of armed forces involving any types of weapons,

/...

including nuclear or other types of weapons of mass destruction" and not to "threaten such use". Article I then gives practical expression to the scope of that obligation by specifying "on land, on the sea, in the air or in outer space". Leaving no loop-holes in the provisions of the treaty, article I, paragraph 3, provides that "no consideration may be adduced to justify resort to the threat or use of force in violation of the obligations assumed under this Treaty". Article II of the draft Treaty regulates and develops the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts. Listing the peaceful means of settling disputes which the States parties may themselves choose, the draft Treaty also introduces the obligation of States parties to "refrain from any action which may aggravate the situation to such a degree as to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security and thereby make a peaceful settlement of the dispute more difficult".

At the same time, in accordance with article III, each Government retains the right to individual or collective self-defence as provided for in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. Nothing in the draft Treaty jeopardizes the right of each State to repulse aggression and eliminate its consequences or the right of colonial and dependent peoples to struggle for their social and national liberation by any means available to them.

In strict accordance with the definition of aggression elaborated by the United Nations, the Soviet draft Treaty outlaws aggression. Such a prohibition of aggression means that observance of this prohibition would obviate the need to use force to repulse aggression, and reliable guarantees would be established for the security of all States, large and small.

Article IV of the draft Treaty is especially important and opportune in that it links the problem of increasing the effectiveness of the principle of the non-use of force with the obligation of States to "make all possible efforts to implement effective measures for lessening military confrontation and for disarmament which would constitute steps towards the achievement of the ultimate goal - general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

The universal and general character of the draft Treaty is reaffirmed in articles V to VII, which establish the unlimited duration of the Treaty, the procedure for signature and ratification and the duty of participants to take the necessary measures at the national level to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Treaty. An important feature of the draft Treaty is the fact that it enters into force for its participants upon the deposit of the instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General and that there will, consequently, be no need to wait until a given number of countries accede to the Treaty.

The treaty on the non-use of force will play an important role in restraining those who have not abandoned their aggressive intentions. The effectiveness and general observance of the treaty will be strengthened by the entire machinery of the United Nations, which has the necessary powers to resolve all differences by peaceful means and to take the necessary measures to maintain or restore international peace and security. This existing United Nations machinery will be strengthened by the conclusion of the world treaty on the non-use of force in

/...

international relations and also by the strict compliance of all States with their obligations under the United Nations Charter.

In the opinion of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the draft World Treaty on the Non-Use of Force in International Relations, submitted by the Soviet Union for consideration at the thirty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly, provides a good basis for working out a final text. The Soviet proposal for the conclusion of such a treaty has received broad international support and has been endorsed by the overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations. The thirty-second session of the General Assembly will have the task of concentrating on the practical realization of the proposal for the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force and on work to reach agreement on a generally acceptable text for such a treaty.

The Byelorussian SSR is convinced that the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force will constitute an important measure for eliminating the threat of war and aggression, will strengthen the guarantees of security for all States, and will permit intensification of the process of détente in international relations, improvement of the political climate in the world and the establishment of a world free from war, violence and aggression, a world of co-operation and progress.

A. E. GURINOVICH  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of  
the Byelorussian SSR

-----