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LETTER DATED 17 APRIL 1962 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED
NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE ACTING SECRETARY-GENERAL

In reply to your letter of 2 January 1962, I have the honour to forward a letter from Mr. K.V. Kiselev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, giving the views of the Government of the Byelorussian SSR on the possibility of putting into effect General Assembly resolution 1664 (XVI) of 4 December 1961, which concerns an inquiry into the conditions under which countries not possessing nuclear weapons might be willing to enter into undertakings to refrain from manufacturing or acquiring such weapons or receiving them in their territory.

I trust you will arrange for the Minister's letter to be circulated as an official United Nations document.

(Signed) P. ASTAPENKO
Permanent Representative of the Byelorussian SSR
to the United Nations

Minsk, 10 April 1962

Sir,

In reply to your letter No. PO 134 of 2 January 1962, in which you ask for the views of the Government of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic on the possibility of putting into effect General Assembly resolution 1664 (XVI) of 4 December 1961, which concerns an inquiry into the "conditions under which countries not possessing nuclear weapons might be willing to enter into specific undertakings to refrain from manufacturing or otherwise acquiring such weapons and to refuse to receive, in the future, nuclear weapons in their territories on behalf of any other country", I wish to make the following statement.

The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic has always actively supported all measures to reduce international tension and promote peaceful co-operation between States; it has consistently striven to avert the threat of nuclear war and to achieve general and complete disarmament, the prohibition of all types of thermo-nuclear weapons and the complete destruction of stockpiles of such weapons.

At the present time, only four States possess nuclear weapons. There is no doubt that an increase in the number of States manufacturing nuclear weapons or having them in their territory would seriously complicate the international situation and considerably increase the threat of war. It is easy to imagine what would be the result of handing over nuclear weapons to, for example, the Federal Republic of Germany, where there are a number of people with revanchist dreams who would stop at nothing in order to achieve their aggressive ends.

A further spread of nuclear weapons would place great difficulties in the way of the conclusion of a treaty on general and complete disarmament, the fundamental task now confronting the whole world. The right way to solve this problem was indicated by the USSR Government in the draft treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict international control which it submitted to the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee on 15 March 1962.

U Thant,
Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations,
New York.

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The Government of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic considers it advisable, in order to prevent a further spread of nuclear weapons, to conclude an agreement under which States not possessing nuclear weapons would undertake not to produce such weapons, not to acquire them from Powers which possess them and not to allow them to be stockpiled on their territory.

For those reasons, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, at the sixteenth session of the United Nations General Assembly, supported the Swedish Government's proposal and voted for resolution 1664 (XVI).

The adoption of measures to prevent a further spread of nuclear weapons, which is the purpose of resolution 1664 (XVI), would further the vital interests of all States to an equal extent. Such measures, accompanied by an undertaking by all four nuclear Powers not to give nuclear weapons or information relating to their manufacture to other countries, would help to create favourable conditions for a practical solution to the problem of general and complete disarmament.

It is well known that one of the nuclear Powers, the Soviet Union, has stated that it is prepared to enter into an undertaking not to give nuclear weapons or information relating to their manufacture to other countries on condition that the other nuclear Powers enter into the same undertaking. Unfortunately, the United States, the United Kingdom and France have not so far indicated that they are prepared to enter into similar undertakings, thus revealing their unwillingness to help to achieve the aims of resolution 1664 (XVI), which the General Assembly adopted by an overwhelming majority.

The Government of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic considers that a further spread of nuclear weapons could likewise be prevented by the establishment of nuclear-free zones. Under such an arrangement, nuclear weapons would not be manufactured or stockpiled in certain geographical zones. This would be fully consistent with the terms of General Assembly resolution 1664 (XVI).

It is well known that the idea of nuclear-free zones has wide support among the peoples of all countries. Striking proof of this is provided by resolution 1652 (XVI) of 24 November 1961 on the consideration of Africa as a denuclearized zone, which was adopted at the sixteenth session of the General Assembly and was strongly supported by the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Declaring Africa a denuclearized zone sets a good precedent for the establishment of similar zones in other regions. A good basis for agreement on the establishment of such zones might be found in the proposal by the Government of the Polish People's Republic for a nuclear-free zone in central Europe, the proposal by the People's Republic of China for a nuclear-free zone in the Far East and the Pacific and the proposals regarding the Balkans and the Adriatic, the Near and Middle East and other areas.

The establishment of zones free from nuclear weapons would reduce the threat of outbreaks of hostilities, eliminate the possibility of a dangerous spread of nuclear weapons to other countries, groups of countries or military blocs and help to improve relations among States. Consequently, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic considers it its duty to continue to campaign for the establishment of nuclear-free zones.

Now that the General Assembly has adopted resolutions which are intended as the first steps towards eliminating the threat of an annihilatory nuclear war, it is the duty of all States which sincerely seek peace to give all possible assistance in carrying out those resolutions.

As far as the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is concerned, it will, as before, resolutely support the adoption of measures to solve the question of questions of our time - general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) K. KISELEV
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the
Byelorussian SSR
