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STRENGTHENING OF SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Letter dated 4 July 1986 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to
the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose the text of a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, E. A. Shevardnadze, concerning the strengthening of security in the Mediterranean.

I request you to arrange for the circulation of the text of this letter as an official document of the General Assembly under item 69 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) V. S. SAFRONCHUK
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of the
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
to the United Nations

* A/41/50/Rev.1.

ANNEX

Letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the
Soviet Union addressed to the Secretary-General

In the current complex and tense international situation, there is an urgent need for practical action to bring about, through the joint efforts of States, a turn for the better and to begin the movement towards building a reliable and all-embracing system of international security which would cover all regions of the world. In accordance with the decisions of the twenty-seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, all the Soviet Union's foreign policy actions and its approach to international problems, including the problem of guaranteeing security in the Mediterranean, are geared to the achievement of this objective.

The Soviet Union has more than once drawn the attention of the world community of States, sometimes at the highest political level, to the abnormal situation which is taking shape in this densely populated region of the world. In essence, it has become an arena for military confrontation, oversaturated with weapons, including the most destructive ones, nuclear weapons.

The reasons for this are well known: they stem directly from the "neo-globalism" policy of the United States of America and its imperialist ambitions aimed at destabilizing States with which it does not agree and suppressing national liberation movements.

The unprecedented build-up of the United States military presence, the large-scale military preparations, the unceasing manoeuvres off the shores of independent countries in the region, the provocative actions with respect to Cyprus, the campaign of blackmail against Syria, the threats of the use of force against other countries in the Mediterranean basin, the aggressive actions of the United States strategic partner, Israel, and, finally, the unbridled campaign against Libya have strained the situation in this part of the world to the limit. Matters have gone so far as a direct armed attack by the United States on Libya, a sovereign State member of the United Nations, in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the generally accepted norms of international law. Even now, the threats of new attacks against Libya have not ceased. This policy of State terrorism may have serious consequences extending far beyond the confines of the Mediterranean region.

It is perfectly obvious that the evolution of the situation in the Mediterranean directly affects many countries, the Soviet Union among them. Deeply concerned to ensure the security of this region, the USSR strongly supports the proposal of the non-aligned countries for the transformation of the Mediterranean into a zone of lasting peace and co-operation, and is ready to make its substantial contribution to the strengthening of peace and co-operation in the Mediterranean region as called for by the General Assembly in a resolution adopted at its fortieth session (resolution 40/157 of 16 December 1985).

The Soviet proposals for the extension of agreed confidence-building measures to this region, the reduction of armed forces, the withdrawal from the Mediterranean Sea of ships carrying nuclear weapons, the non-deployment of nuclear weapons in the territory of Mediterranean non-nuclear States and the acceptance by the nuclear Powers of an obligation not to use such weapons against any Mediterranean country which does not permit their deployment in its territory also still stand.

Recently, the Soviet Union came forward with a far-reaching new initiative for the withdrawal of the United States and Soviet naval fleets from the Mediterranean Sea.

For our country, there is in principle no need for its naval forces to remain in the Mediterranean Sea on a permanent basis. The Soviet Union is compelled to keep its ships there constantly for one essential reason alone - the presence in direct proximity to our borders of the United States sixth fleet, equipped with nuclear missiles and threatening the security of the USSR and its allies and friends. If the United States, which is thousands of miles away from the Mediterranean, withdrew its fleet, then the Soviet Union would simultaneously do the same. We are ready to enter unconditionally into talks on this issue.

Further steps for the strengthening of security in this region could in our view be defined in the light of the Soviet proposals contained in the statement of 15 January 1986 concerning the eliminating of weapons of mass destruction (both nuclear and chemical) by the end of the present century (see document A/41/97).

The implementation of these practical measures, together with the reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons in Europe, would undoubtedly lead to an improvement in the situation in the Mediterranean and the world as a whole, and would promote the strengthening of security and the establishment of normal relations among States.

Now as never before, urgent steps are required to reduce the high level of tension and normalize the situation in the Mediterranean region. To achieve this objective, painstaking work by all interested parties is required.

The Soviet Union is convinced that the problem of security in the Mediterranean must be solved on the basis of joint efforts by States, and in this context it takes an understanding attitude towards the initiatives of the Mediterranean non-aligned countries, who are preparing to hold this year, in Malta, their second conference. We consider that a useful role would also be played by a broader meeting similar to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. In addition to the Mediterranean States and States adjacent to the region, the United States of America and other interested countries could take part in it. At such a conference, States could reach agreement on the drawing up of specific recommendations for the establishment of a régime of peace and security for the Mediterranean region.

The question of the Mediterranean has been under consideration in the United Nations for a number of years, and the discussion has shown the extent of the

concern felt by the vast majority of States at the dangerous course of events in this region. On the whole, useful decisions have been taken regarding it, but the present situation makes it essential to adopt concrete measures which will lead to a strengthening of security in the Mediterranean, and the broader meeting we have proposed on this subject would be particularly conducive to this goal.

In the view of the Soviet Union, the United Nations should use all its authority and the possibilities open to it in order to promote, in practical terms, the transformation of the Mediterranean region into a region of stable peace, security and co-operation for all.

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