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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PEACE

Letter dated 22 October 1986 from the Permanent
Representative of Czechoslovakia to the United
Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith messages sent to Your Excellency by assemblies held at Charles University, Prague, and at the Czech University of Technology, Prague, at the beginning of the academic year 1986/1987.

I would be most grateful if you could have the texts of the two messages circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 21.

(Signed) Jaroslav ČEŠAR

ANNEX I

Message dated 1 September 1986 from the assembly of Charles University, Prague, to the Secretary-General

The representatives of the academic staff of historic Charles University in Prague express their deep respect and send you a message from their assembly held on the threshold of the new academic year convinced that you will receive it with understanding.

The United Nations, which you represent, has declared this year 1986 the International Year of Peace. At a time when the fate of our planet is trembling in its very foundations before the possibility of self-destruction of humankind this declaration is an act that helps unite the will of honest people regardless of race, political affiliation or religious denomination in the united struggle for averting the horrific danger and for the establishment of permanent peace. We have met to support this noble idea. The new international situation shows that the yearnings of ordinary people are finding an ever stronger response among political representatives and thereby also the support of permanent peace initiatives, which in international politics are consistently supported by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Of them we mainly have in mind the comprehensive proposals put forward by its supreme representative Mikhail Gorbachev, especially in January 1986, which have fundamental importance for the maintenance of peace and which have been joined also by the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

To proceed from the reality of the nuclear and space era and to act accordingly in international relations are at present categoric requirements. Mountains of nuclear and other weapons have been designed, and yet feverish armament has not weakened but is accelerating. "The balance of fear" ceases to be a factor of containment. Old ideas of war as a means of attaining political aims have become obsolescent. At present, it is no longer possible to safeguard one's own security without respecting the security of other States and nations.

We are a country whose history is one of suffering that has been brought upon our people by aggressive wars waged by the European Powers. We are, however, also a country that through the Hussite movement in the mediaeval period raised its voice for swords to be forged into ploughs. This voice, as you yourself recalled in your speech at our University, led to the famous political initiative of King George of Poděbrady to establish an organization of nations for securing peace. The same idea was also expressed by the Teacher of Nations J. A. Comenius at a time when foreign armies ruthlessly exterminated our nation only because it wanted to live independently.

In so far as today we fully and unreservedly support the peace policy of the Soviet Union, in our consciousness the present situation is linked with this tradition. As teachers we are responsible for future generations. We consider it to be our moral obligation to do everything for the implementation of the goals of the peace policy of the countries of the socialist community, for which the progressive people of all continents, the United Nations Organization and you personally are striving.

The declaration of the International Year of Peace was undoubtedly a great endorsement for the peace movement in the whole world. This experience leads us to express the demand that the United Nations should turn the Year of Peace into a decade of peace. This would be an act that in the consciousness of the population of our beautiful "blue planet" would deepen the feeling that the fraternity of nations, represented by the United Nations, is a powerful moral force that is capable of concretely uniting nations for noble aims.

We are sending this message and this proposal in the irrevocable conviction that it will meet with your understanding, namely, for your brave and wise peaceful political attitudes. This conviction is confirmed by the fact that, as Doctor honoris causa of Charles University, you will also understand us personally, as we found during your visit to our historic University.

Expressing our deep respect we are sending you this message with sincere collegial greetings and wishes of full success in the fulfilment of your responsible mission.

(Signed) Professor Zdenek CESKA
Rector of Charles University

ANNEX II

Message from the assembly of the Czech University
of Technology, Prague, to the Secretary-General

The assembled students, pedagogues and other staff members of the Czech University of Technology, Prague, state that now as never before resolute, vigorous and concrete action is needed on the part of all States, nations and people of different views and convictions in order to stop the human race from falling into a nuclear abyss. There should be no hesitation since, despite the desires and hopes of the overwhelming majority of the population of the Earth, armament has not declined; on the contrary, it is being stepped up at a dangerous pace and, as a result of the intensified militarization of the United States and other NATO countries, there is a real danger that it might be extended into outer space.

The present nuclear and space era requires that the leaders of all countries, especially of those possessing nuclear weapons, fully realize the extent of the nuclear threat, display far-sightedness and political courage corresponding to the realities of this century and do their utmost to preserve peace on our planet. Their action must be based on the awareness of their great responsibility for the fate of their respective countries as well as of all nations of the world. They should accede to the proposal of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics put forward on 15 January of this year that offers a carefully elaborated programme of a fundamental reversal of the current unfavourable development of the international situation and presents a plan for elimination of nuclear weapons from the whole world by the year 2000.

The unilateral Soviet moratorium on all nuclear explosions, which was declared on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima with an atomic bomb, has been in effect for more than a year. All people of good will have welcomed this example of the right approach to the current problems in the hope for liberation from the fear of a nuclear catastrophe. This moratorium has received the support of the United Nations General Assembly and of other important world bodies and organizations because it proves the earnestness and sincerity of the Soviet programme of nuclear disarmament by means of a deed, not just a suggestion. It thus constitutes an appeal calling for a new policy - a policy of realism, peace and co-operation. Actual halting of nuclear testing is a simple and at the same time effective barrier blocking the road to further nuclear arms build-up and to the development and sophistication of nuclear-weapon systems.

When repeatedly extending the moratorium, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union appealed to the good sense and dignity of the Americans, urging them not to miss again the historic opportunity to halt nuclear testing. The conclusion of an agreement to this end might become the most significant event of the International Year of Peace as a major step towards the amelioration of the international situation.

This assembly of pedagogues, staff members and students of the Czech University of Technology fully identifies itself with the noble appeal made by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and requests Your Excellency to use all the

weight of your internationally recognized authority to give continued support to the Soviet moratorium on nuclear explosions and to strive for preventing further nuclear testing on the part of the great Powers, so that the nuclear test sites may become silent in this year and so that 1986 may enter history as a year worthy of the name "International Year of Peace" and as a starting point for the International Decade of Peace.

Pedagogues, staff members and students of the Czech University of Technology,
Prague

(Signed) The Chairman of the University
Committee of the Communist Party
of Czechoslovakia

The Rector of the Czech University
of Technology

The Chairman of the University
Committee of the Socialist Youth
Union

The Chairman of the University
Committee of the Revolutionary
Trade Union Movement
