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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PEACE

Letter dated 27 April 1987 from the Permanent Representatives
of Austria and Hungary to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

We have the honour to submit to you the Declaration (see annex I and the Final Document (see annex II) entitled: "Acting for disarmament and a world of security, peace, freedom and solidarity", adopted by the second World Meeting of War Veterans, Resistants and War Victims, held at Vienna from 1 to 3 December 1986, within the framework of the International Year of Peace.

We would be most grateful if you could have this letter and its annexes circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 26 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Dr. Karl FISCHER
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary, Permanent
Representative of Austria
to the United Nations

(Signed) Ferenc ESZTERGALYOS
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary, Permanent
Representative of Hungary
to the United Nations

* A/42/50.

ANNEX I

Declaration on acting for disarmament and a world of security,
peace, freedom and solidarity, adopted on 3 December 1986 by
the second World Meeting of War Veterans, Resistants and War
Victims, held at Vienna from 1 to 3 December 1986

Since the end of the Second World War, tens of millions of people have met their death in more than 150 armed conflicts, some of which, raging still, could lead to widespread war. Violations of human rights, terrorism, mistrust and famine are creating highly dangerous tensions.

With weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, man has created a means of destroying himself. The arms race is consuming research, effort and enormous budgets, seriously affecting the future of all and rendering sterile the possibilities of solidarity for the benefit of peoples suffering from ignorance, hunger and misery.

Adversaries or allies yesterday, we who have experienced the tragedy of war, cannot accept such an absurd situation. Aware of our differences of opinion, but having learned to overcome them, we reject the idea that war is inevitable and join together to build peace, a peace founded on solidarity between nations and peoples, the interdependence of their interests and reciprocal confidence between States.

The international commitments embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the International Bill of Human Rights, and the Helsinki Final Act, and the recommendations concerning the fight against international terrorism, must be fully respected by all States. In their relations with each other, in particular to settle their disputes or conflicts, they must accept negotiation, conciliation and arbitration as provided in the Charter of the United Nations, or apply any other peaceful means.

Thus the conditions for real security in a climate of détente and co-operation will be created, facilitating a halt to the arms race, the reduction of overall arms strength to the lowest possible level, conventional weapons included, the exclusively peaceful use of outer space, and progress towards general, balanced and controlled disarmament.

Science and technology must not lead to a world burnt to ashes, but, on the contrary, contribute to economic and social advancement and enhance individual human development.

The world veterans community, conscious of its duty to youth, has multiplied its warnings and developed its action. It knows that peace must be won and must be struggled for, and that it demands lucidity, courage and perseverance. It intends to pursue its efforts for the success of all international meetings and negotiations, in particular those that bring together the two great Powers whose first responsibility is to halt the arms race.

At the dawn of the third millenium, we are at the crossroads of anguish and hope, between the threat that hangs heavily over the world and the enormous potentials of progress. May men and women of all nations, aware that it is necessary to act, join their efforts with ours and strongly urge all Governments in the world to take concrete action to establish a new order of security, peace, freedom and solidarity.

European Confederation of War Veterans
International Confederation of Former Prisoners of War
International Federation of Resistance Movements
World Veterans Federation

ANNEX II

Final document of the second World Meeting of War
Veterans, Resistants and War Victims, held at
Vienna from 1 to 3 December 1986

International Year of Peace

Acting for disarmament and a world of security, peace,
freedom and solidarity

1. In the framework of the International Year of Peace, proclaimed by the United Nations, we are meeting again at Vienna, seven years after the first World Meeting in Rome, still more firmly determined to act for disarmament and a world of security, peace, freedom and solidarity.

2. Nearly 100 million people have perished during the conflicts that have raged since the beginning of this century, dying in the fury of battlefields, in the horrors of torture, prisons, executions, concentration camps and camps of extermination. Wars have left families and populations decimated, millions of refugees and countries devastated and impoverished.

We have fought side by side or in opposed camps in harsh armed battle.

Today, we, the survivors, are aware of our differences of opinion in many fields but, turning towards the future, we have put into practice our determination to rise above them and to bring out our reasons for action in common, with reciprocal respect and confidence.

3. By reason of our painful experiences, we intend to be in the forefront of those who work for peace. We maintain that war is not inevitable and that peace must be won and must be struggled for.

We do not accept the possibility of self-destruction by humanity and the disappearance of all life on our planet.

We maintain that it is both necessary and possible to halt the arms race.

We maintain that it is both necessary and possible to reverse the current process, achieve balanced arms reduction, and move progressively on towards general and controlled disarmament.

4. Although another world war has been avoided since 1945, over 150 armed conflicts have stained the world with blood, causing tens of millions of deaths. Some of these conflicts could escalate to widespread war, leading to the use, which could extend beyond control, of weapons of mass destruction.

5. In the present state of the world and its technology, war can solve nothing. Dangers are mounting constantly with the development and diversification of mass

destruction weapons, the growing number of countries that possess them, and the risk that the arms race might extend into outer space, grow out of control, placing mankind at the mercy of a technical failure.

The staggering and ruinous accumulation of weapons, by fostering reciprocal fear and mistrust, far from ensuring the independence and integrity of States, is increasing the danger of conflicts.

6. Science and technology, advancing with rapid strides, which should mainly serve cultural, economic, and social goals and contribute to the reduction of inequalities through solidarity, are on the contrary being diverted to the allocation of an increasing share of national resources to armaments.

7. The distress in which millions of human beings suffering from misery and famine find themselves is unacceptable. It is, moreover, a source of conflicts and trouble. The same is true of the situation of peoples who are deprived of their right to independence and of the victims of all forms of discrimination, apartheid, oppression contrary to human rights and disinformation.

8. The mounting violence and threat or use of force, brutality and the frequency of terrorist acts, which should be condemned in all their forms, have tragic consequences and are contributing to creating dangerous tensions in international relations.

9. The maintenance of peace, in a framework of freedom, security, and progress, which we want for everyone, implies or requires:

That each country may enjoy its independence, each nation may freely decide its own future, and each human being may be guaranteed all the rights and freedoms set forth in the International Bill of Human Rights;

Respect by all States for their international commitments embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the International Bill of Human Rights, and the Helsinki Final Act;

That, in their relations for the settlement of their disputes or conflicts, the States accept negotiations, conciliation, and arbitration as provided in the Charter of the United Nations, or apply other peaceful means;

Strengthening of the United Nations, and in particular the role given to the Security Council;

Development of international co-operation in all fields, in particular through the specialized agencies of the United Nations;

Co-operation in the fight against terrorism in accordance with the terms of the resolution adopted by consensus by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1985;

True and sincere negotiations between all States, contributing to building confidence, in particular between the two Powers which are the most heavily armed and which for that very reason, have a special responsibility.

10. We welcome and support all initiatives in that direction, especially bilateral and multilateral meetings.

We hope that the negotiations carried on at the summit meetings at Geneva and Reykjavik will speedily lead to concrete results.

We welcome the agreement reached at Stockholm in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and express the hope that the Vienna meeting of 35 States will develop and intensify the Helsinki process.

11. We call upon all the nuclear Powers to recognize that a nuclear conflict would have neither a winner nor a loser and could mean the end of the human species, as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America have declared at Geneva on November 1985.

In view of their special responsibility, the two major Powers should agree rapidly to stop all testing of nuclear weapons, thereby curbing their improvement and the production of new ones. They would thus pave the way for the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty on nuclear weapons open to all States.

The deployment of weapons in outer space, which should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, should be given up.

The escalation of weaponry should be brought to a halt, especially in the nuclear field.

Balanced nuclear and conventional weapons reductions must be arrived at rapidly, and chemical and biological weapons eliminated, in order to progress towards disarmament under conditions guaranteeing security for all.

It is essential that all measures taken are accompanied by the appropriate monitoring and control, in order to build up the confidence indispensable for the implementation of arms limitation plans.

12. Halting the arms race and progressing towards disarmament should make it possible to redirect the world's human, material, and financial resources towards waging a more effective fight against famine, disease, unemployment, illiteracy, natural and man made disasters.

International relations and co-operation in the economic and social fields more favourable to individual human development could thus be established.

13. States have different political systems. Some belong to alliances; others do not. They are at different stages of development.

But men and women, made aware of their vulnerability and their interdependence, must work together to define and build foundations for active solidarity.

At a time when modern communications technology makes it possible for everyone to keep abreast of the development of events as they take place wherever they may be, lasting boundaries barring the flow of ideas stemming from the need of peace, justice and liberty are no longer possible.

As long as ignorance and misery persists, no one can feel really free and worthy.

To ensure everywhere education for peace and human rights, to develop a spirit of solidarity through concrete action, is to invest in the future of humanity.

14. In conveying the rationale of our motives of vigilance, commitment, hope and confidence in mankind, we are addressing a message to all our fellow citizens, particularly the new generations, the millions of men and women for whom the right to live in dignity is a fundamental right. We are at the crossroads of anguish and hope. To march forward in the right direction, let us together take action with Governments and all those who have the power to persuade, to act and to decide.

Now, at the end of the twentieth century, it is our common wish to contribute with all our power to open that new road through appropriate action against violence, oppression, and war, to achieve full human development in a world of greater justice, greater freedom, greater solidarity and greater brotherhood.

European Confederation of War Veterans
International Confederation of Former Prisoners of War
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Mandate

The second World Meeting mandates the four international organizations mentioned above and their Co-ordinating Committee to draw up all measures with a view to giving the greatest impact to this text, and to promote common action for the implementation of the recommendations it contains.
