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Letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR addressed
to the Secretary-General of the United Nations concerning
the tasks of the Second Disarmament Decade

Sir,

At the thirty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the USSR delegation supported the resolution entitled "Consideration of the declaration of the 1980s as a disarmament decade". The USSR considers that the main task during this Decade will be to maintain, strengthen and further develop the positive results achieved in curbing the arms race in the 1970s and to bring about the implementation of practical measures in this field. The 1980s should be a decade of substantial progress in the struggle for a durable peace.

In the course of the 1970s, which were proclaimed by the United Nations as the First Disarmament Decade, certain positive results were achieved. Specifically, international agreements were concluded on the prohibition of the emplacement of weapons of mass destruction on the sea bed and the ocean floor, on the prohibition of bacteriological weapons, and on the prohibition of the use of environmental modification techniques for military purposes, and agreements were reached on the limitation of strategic arms and on the prevention of nuclear war. During these years a start was made on the implementation of certain confidence-building measures in Europe. A specific framework for negotiations on disarmament questions was established, both on a multilateral as well as a bilateral basis. The first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament - at which useful decisions were taken - was held: the task at the present time is to ensure that these decisions are given effect.

The results of negotiations on disarmament problems in the 1970s demonstrate that genuine measures in this area are feasible and can be realized. What was achieved in the previous Decade has laid quite a sound basis for further steps in the direction of reducing armaments and of disarmament.

Nevertheless, owing to the opposition of certain forces, the arms race has not been halted. The United States and its allies continue to increase their military budgets. New and even more dangerous types and systems of weapons are being developed and included in the armaments of these countries, and a quantitative increase in their arsenals of weapons is taking place.

At the juncture of the 1970s and 1980s, the situation in the world has become more acute as a result of actions by the United States and certain other NATO countries to undermine détente and to increase the pace of the arms race.

The Soviet Union considers that, in the context of the present international situation, it is extremely important not to weaken but, on the contrary, to stimulate the efforts of all peace-loving States to strengthen peace, to eliminate the threat of war, and to achieve concrete measures in the matter of curbing the arms race and achieving disarmament. The USSR's position of principle remains unchanged: the Soviet Union is prepared to limit and to prohibit, on a mutually

agreed basis with other States, any type of weapon without, of course, prejudicing the security of anyone and on the basis of complete reciprocity between the States possessing the weapon in question.

The Soviet Union is in favour of negotiations on a broad range of questions. All the negotiations in this field which were initiated in recent years in various forums and on a bilateral basis and which, at the present time, for one reason or another have been interrupted or deferred, should be resumed and continued. The USSR and other countries of the socialist community have put forward a realistic programme of measures covering virtually all aspects of the problem of halting the arms race and achieving disarmament, and indicating the main areas in which efforts should be concentrated in the coming years. Specifically, these measures are as follows:

Cessation of the production of nuclear weapons of all types and the gradual reduction of stockpiles of such weapons until they have been completely eliminated, and the immediate initiation to this end of corresponding negotiations with the participation of all States possessing nuclear weapons as well as a number of other States which do not possess nuclear weapons. Parallel measures should also be adopted to strengthen the political and international legal guarantees of the security of States;

Further limitation and reduction of the number of strategic arms as well as their further limitation from a qualitative standpoint, taking into account all factors influencing the strategic situation in the world, including Europe;

Conclusion of an agreement on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests;

Conclusion of a treaty on the prohibition of radiological weapons;

Adoption of further measures to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and, to this end, the universal accession of States to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

Conclusion of a convention on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear-weapon States;

Conclusion of an agreement on the non-deployment of nuclear weapons in the territory of States in which there are no such weapons at present;

Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world;

The limitation and subsequent reduction of military activity in the Indian Ocean and the establishment of a zone of peace in that region;

Conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons;

Conclusion of a comprehensive agreement prohibiting the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons;

Conclusion of a convention prohibiting the production, stockpiling, development and use of nuclear neutron weapons;

Cessation of the development of new types of conventional weapons of great destructive power;

Achievement of agreement on renunciation of the expansion of the armies and increases in the conventional weapons of Powers which are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, as well as of countries allied with them under military agreements;

Curtailement of sales and deliveries of conventional weapons;

Elaboration of an international agreement prohibiting or limiting the use of conventional weapons causing excessive injury or having indiscriminate effects;

Accession by all States which have not yet done so to existing agreements on the limitation of the arms race and on disarmament;

Reduction of the military budgets of States which are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, as well as those of other militarily significant States, in absolute figures or in terms of percentage points;

Achievement of agreement on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in central Europe;

Conclusion between all States participating in the All-European Conference of a treaty on not being the first to use not only nuclear but also conventional weapons against one another;

Further extension of confidence-building measures in Europe;

Convening of a conference on the relaxation of military tension and disarmament in Europe; and

Convening of a world-wide conference on disarmament.

The Soviet Union is convinced that the implementation of the above measures would give the Second Disarmament Decade real meaning. The realization of these measures would be of historical significance in the struggle for a durable peace in the world.

States and the statesmen responsible for their foreign policies should endeavour to ensure that the new Disarmament Decade is a true decade of disarmament and not a decade of the continuation and intensification of the arms race.

(Signed)

A. GROMYKO
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the USSR, 11 April 1980