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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 23 September 1980 from the Minister for Foreign  
Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics addressed  
to the Secretary-General

On the instructions of the Soviet Government I am conveying to you the text of the Memorandum of the Soviet Union entitled "Peace, disarmament and international security guarantees".

Taking into account the important place occupied by the problems of disarmament and the strengthening of international security on the agenda of the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, I request you to have the text of the above-mentioned Memorandum distributed among the delegations of the States Members of the United Nations as an official document of the General Assembly under item 9 (General debate) and item 48 (General and complete disarmament).

(Signed) A. GROMYKO  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
of the USSR

ANNEX

PEACE, DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY GUARANTEES

Memorandum of the Soviet Union

At present, the States and peoples of the world are living under the conditions of a new aggravation of the international situation.

Détente, which in the 1970s became the predominant trend in the development of international relations, has been subjected to attacks by certain influential forces. This has resulted in an exacerbation of the world situation. The arms race is acquiring even broader dimensions. In certain fields it is approaching a point beyond which it may become impossible to curb it effectively by means of agreements based on mutual verification. Attempts by some States to achieve military superiority and upset the military balance of forces in the world are becoming increasingly evident.

The negotiations on various aspects of limiting and ending the arms race, which intensified in the 1970s and produced certain results, have recently been slowed down and on a number of major issues, interrupted by the United States of America.

In these circumstances the Soviet Union believes it necessary to draw the attention of the States Members of the United Nations and of all the peoples of the world to recent developments in major areas of the struggle for universal peace, the halting of the arms race and disarmament and for reliable guarantees of international security, and to remind them of the proposals put forward by it and other socialist countries in the interests of achieving success in this historic struggle.

The only possible way to prevent a return to the "cold war" and to establish normal stable relations between States is, as the Soviet Union sees it, to make consistent progress in international détente.

Détente means a willingness to resolve disagreements and disputes by peaceful means and not by force, threats or sabre-rattling. Détente means a certain measure of trust and the ability to take into account each other's legitimate interests.

To proceed along the road of détente means to advance towards removing the threat of world war, towards disarmament, towards strengthening international security and ensuring the most favourable peaceful conditions for a successful solution of the social and economic problems facing mankind.

Under current conditions there is no reasonable alternative to the policy of international détente. The only option for the world is either to follow the road of renunciation of the use of force, disarmament and mutually advantageous co-operation on the basis of equality, or to be plunged into the abyss of an unbridled arms race and escalation of armed conflicts fraught with the gravest consequences for mankind.

The Soviet Union believes that it is important to strive for the settlement of existing regional conflicts and at the same time to demonstrate concern for taking measures to avert or prevent new conflicts of a similar nature.

The Soviet Union is convinced that through the common efforts of peace-loving forces, it is possible to stop the unfavourable development of international events, defend and consolidate détente, and extend it to all parts of the world. As in the past, the Soviet Union is willing to make a tangible contribution to this noble struggle in the interests of strengthening peace and the security of the peoples.

The consistency of the Soviet Union's active peace-loving policy in international affairs has been reaffirmed by L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, who said: "We shall continue to spare no effort to preserve détente and everything positive that was achieved in the 1970s, to ensure a turn towards disarmament, to uphold the right of the peoples to free and independent development, and to preserve and consolidate peace."

Halting of the nuclear arms race and renunciation of the  
use of force in international relations

1. As far back as 1946, the Soviet Union took the initiative of proposing the conclusion of an international convention banning for ever the production and use of atomic weapons so that the great scientific discoveries in the field of nuclear fission could be used solely for the purposes of improving the well-being and living standards of the peoples of the world and developing culture and science for the benefit of mankind.

At that time, when it was somewhat easier to solve this historically vital problem, the Soviet Union proposed that all parties to such a convention should assume solemn obligations not to use atomic weapons under any circumstances; to ban their manufacture and storage; and to destroy all existing stockpiles of finished and unfinished atomic-weapon products within a period of three months. It was proposed that violation of those obligations should be declared the gravest international crime against humanity.

Yet, in response to these proposals by the Soviet Union, which were imbued with concern for the fate of mankind, the other Powers primarily involved took a decidedly negative stand and embarked upon a course of accelerating the nuclear arms race in the naive belief that they would succeed in maintaining a monopoly over the production of those weapons.

As a result, the problem of banning and destroying nuclear weapons has become immeasurably more complicated. That does not mean, however, that it is insoluble. Nuclear weapons were developed by people; and people can and must outlaw and eventually eliminate them.

2. In 1978, the Soviet Union and other States parties to the Warsaw Treaty again put forward a proposal for halting the production of all types of nuclear weapons and gradually reducing their stockpiles until they are completely destroyed. At its special session devoted to disarmament and later at its regular sessions in 1978 and 1979, the United Nations General Assembly expressed support for that proposal. The Committee on Disarmament has before it the concrete observations of the socialist countries regarding the commencement of, and procedure for, such talks. The matter brooks no further delay. Those who are evading a businesslike consideration of the problem of nuclear disarmament are taking on full responsibility for the consequences of that line of action.

3. In advocating radical measures of nuclear disarmament, the Soviet Union does not approach the issue from an "all or nothing" position. On more than one occasion it has also expressed its readiness to follow the path of partial solutions capable of limiting the nuclear arms race and blocking, one by one, the channels for its development.

These statements by the Soviet Union are based on practical deeds. The USSR took the initiative of, and actively participated in, concluding the important international agreements on banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water (1963), on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (1968), and on the prohibition of the placing in orbit around the earth of nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction and of their installation on celestial bodies (1967) or on the sea-bed and the ocean floor (1971).

The importance of these agreements lies in the strict and precise obligations set forth in them and in the fact that, in their totality, they provide a basis for further progress towards limiting and ending the nuclear arms race.

4. In recent years the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have put forward a whole series of practical proposals, and in the 1970s talks between the States concerned were begun on every one of them.

An important place among them belongs to the proposal for the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. The conclusion of a treaty on this subject would mean that no State would ever again conduct a single test explosion of nuclear weapons and, consequently, no type of nuclear weapons could be improved or developed anew.

In the mid-1970s, certain progress was discernible in the solution of the problem of the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. Tripartite negotiations began on this matter, with the participation of the USSR, the United States and the United Kingdom. From the very beginning the Soviet Union has been working for the success of the negotiations and to that end it has taken important steps to meet its partners half-way. It has agreed to, inter alia, the establishment of a moratorium on peaceful nuclear explosions and the entry into force of the treaty even if at first not all the five nuclear-weapon States but only three of them - the USSR, the United States and the United Kingdom participate in it.

At present, however, the United States and the United Kingdom are clearly pursuing a course of delaying the negotiations and, in a number of instances, they are abandoning proposals which they themselves introduced.

If the negotiations on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests continue to be blocked, this will inevitably open the way to the accelerated development and production of new, even more lethal types of such weapons. The entire responsibility for this will rest with those through whose fault the negotiations are being delayed.

5. The Soviet Union has always advocated that the formulation and implementation of measures for arms limitation and disarmament in the nuclear field should be inseparably linked with the strengthening of political and international legal guarantees of the security of States and of the preservation of peace. Such measures would dispel the atmosphere of suspicion in the relations between States and lead to a general improvement in the international climate, and would contribute to efforts to end the arms race.

The key requirement is to make the renunciation of the use of force a law of international life. On the initiative of the USSR, the United Nations General Assembly adopted in 1972 a solemn declaration of States Members of the Organization on the renunciation of the use of force in international relations concurrently with the permanent prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. The approval by the United Nations in 1974 of the universally recognized Definition of aggression, which, for nearly half a century, the USSR had urged should be elaborated, created an international legal basis for suppressing this extremely grave crime against humanity.

These were important steps, but as the course of events demonstrated, they were still insufficient. The Soviet Union therefore proposed in 1976 that a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations should be elaborated and concluded, and submitted to the United Nations a draft text of such a treaty for its consideration. The United Nations General Assembly supported the proposal. A special body was set up to prepare a draft world treaty.

Unfortunately, no progress has been made in practical work on this subject for a number of years. Those who are unwilling to renounce the use of force and dictate in their relations with independent States are frustrating the elaboration of a treaty on the non-use of force in international relations.

6. Obstacles are also being raised in the path of the practical implementation of other United Nations decisions taken on the initiative of the Soviet Union and designed to strengthen peace and international security. For example, as far back as 1947, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the prohibition of war propaganda in any form whatsoever. Nevertheless, unbridled propaganda of aggression, chauvinism and expansion is to this day being conducted in many countries.

Notwithstanding the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of Their Independence and Sovereignty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly as far back as 1965, acts of gross interference in the internal affairs of other countries, including armed intervention, are still being committed today before the eyes of the whole world.

The Soviet Union has always been and will continue to be on the side of the peoples who fall victim to aggression and interference in the internal affairs of other States, and is prepared to make a constructive contribution to a declaration on the inadmissibility of intervention and interference of States in the internal affairs of other States, which is being elaborated on the initiative of the non-aligned countries.

7. The countries which bear responsibility for the aggravation of the international situation and for the arms race are evading the implementation of such major international instruments adopted on the initiative of the USSR as the United Nations Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security (1970) and the Declaration on the Deepening and Consolidation of International Détente (1977), which determine the main directions of the efforts of States to contain the threat of war and ensure a stable peace.

The implementation of the principle of the inadmissibility of the policy of hegemonism in international relations proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1979 on the initiative of the Soviet Union is of great importance for the solution of this problem.

These decisions of the United Nations, aimed at consolidating the foundations of universal peace and security, should not simply be relegated to history; they are designed to serve States as a guide to action and to be implemented in practice in inter-State relations. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, its struggle for the strengthening of the political and legal guarantees of peace and for international security has but one objective - to ensure lasting peace.

#### Limitation and reduction of strategic arms

8. The halting of the further growth of the strategic nuclear arsenals of States and subsequent consistent quantitative reduction and qualitative limitation of strategic nuclear-weapon systems are of decisive significance for reducing the threat of nuclear war. It is precisely for this reason that for many years the Soviet Union has been consistently seeking the conclusion with the United States of America of effective agreements on the limitation of strategic arms.

The first agreements of this kind between the USSR and the United States, achieved in 1972 - the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems and the Interim Agreement on certain measures with respect to the limitation of strategic offensive arms (SALT I) - evoked everywhere in the world the hope that the strategic arms race could be halted and then reversed.

The Treaty between the USSR and the United States on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (SALT II), signed at the highest level at Vienna on 18 June 1979, is intended to become the next major step in this direction. The peoples expected that, immediately after the entry into force of the SALT II Treaty, negotiations would begin on further limitations and reductions of strategic arms.

So far, however, the SALT II Treaty has not come into force. It is well known who is responsible for the current situation, in which the process of strategic arms limitation was called in question precisely at the moment when prospects became discernible for further progress in this direction, which is of signal importance from the point of view of peace and security.

As for the Soviet Union, it is ready, as before, to participate in the process of the limitation and reduction of strategic arms with strict observance of the principle of equality and equal security. The Soviet Union is prepared to ratify the SALT II Treaty and to comply with all its provisions provided that the United States acts likewise. It also confirms its willingness to participate - after the SALT II Treaty has been ratified - in negotiations on further limitations and reductions of strategic arms.

At the same time it should be made clear what serious damage would be done to the cause of peace and to further efforts to prevent nuclear war should the entry into force of the SALT II Treaty be frustrated, and, equally, who would be responsible for such a turn of events.

#### Prevention of a surprise or unauthorized attack

9. The Soviet Union has repeatedly and persistently raised the question of the need to elaborate measures to prevent the possibility of a surprise attack. Now that the arms race is characterized by not only quantitative but also qualitative aspects, this question is becoming ever more significant and requires an immediate solution.

The problem of preventing the unauthorized or accidental use of nuclear weapons, whose importance has been stressed by the Soviet Union on numerous occasions, also remains as acute as ever. Recent events involving repeated false nuclear alarms in the United States armed forces cannot fail to arouse concern.

The Soviet Union is prepared to hold a serious discussion of these problems on both a multilateral and a bilateral basis, and is willing to co-operate in any steps aimed at preventing nuclear war.

Consolidation of the régime of non-proliferation of  
nuclear weapons

10. The elimination of the threat of nuclear war depends to a large extent on efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union has always opposed the spread of nuclear weapons on our planet.

No one should have any doubts as to the danger to peace that would be brought about by the acquisition of nuclear weapons, in particular, by the countries situated in areas of heightened military danger, as well as by other States seeking to acquire them for aggressive purposes. The results of the recently concluded second Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons testify to the fact that this anxiety is shared by the majority of States, which have declared themselves to be in favour of further measures to strengthen this Treaty and enhance its effectiveness. There is growing understanding of the need to prevent the transfer of nuclear equipment materials and technology intended for peaceful uses from becoming a channel for spreading nuclear weapons. There must be no deviations in this matter.

11. Striving to contribute to the strengthening of the régime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and thereby to the lessening of the threat of nuclear war, the Soviet Union declared in 1978 that it would never use nuclear weapons against those States which renounced the production and acquisition of nuclear weapons and had no such weapons on their territories. It proposed to conclude on that basis an international convention on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear States. The socialist States parties to the Warsaw Treaty proposed in the Warsaw Declaration of 15 May 1980, that this question should be solved on a European scale.

The Soviet Union has also urged that agreement be reached on the non-stationing of nuclear weapons on the territories of States where there are no such weapons at present. Such agreement could envisage a straightforward clear obligation on the part of the nuclear Powers not to station nuclear weapons on the territories of those countries where there are no such weapons at present, regardless of whether or not these countries are allies of a given nuclear State.

The initiatives of the Soviet Union with regard to the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear countries have gained wide support at the United Nations as well as on the part of world public opinion. For two years the Committee on Disarmament has been discussing these initiatives with a view to translating them into concrete agreements, but owing to the non-constructive stand taken by the other nuclear Powers and some of their allies, the progress is slow, to say the least. The Soviet Union considers it necessary to bring this to the attention of all States Members of the United Nations.

12. Proposals to establish nuclear-free zones are being put forward in many regions of the world, for example in Africa, the Middle East, and Northern Europe. The desire of the States of those regions thereby to spare their peoples the risk of being involved in a nuclear conflict deserves all possible support. This is precisely the position of the Soviet Union. On that basis, it has signed and ratified Additional Protocol II of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America.



Prohibition of other means of mass destruction

13. With all the danger inherent in nuclear weapons, they are not the only means in the arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. Other types of weapons of mass destruction already exist, and new, even more horrible weapons can be developed. The use of scientific and technological achievements for the purposes of developing engines of death is fraught with calamity for the peoples.

The Soviet Union, other socialist and all peace-loving countries have long favoured protecting mankind from this threat. For the time being only one real success has been scored in this field: bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons were prohibited in 1972. This is a tangible result but it covers only one type of weapon of mass destruction.

In the meantime some countries are intensively developing new kinds of chemical weapons - weapons which killed and maimed many thousands of people already in the First World War.

As far back as the early 1970s, the Soviet Union, in close co-operation with a number of other States, made a proposal to conclude an international convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. The negotiations on this issue have been conducted for many years. However, there is still no agreement, while the danger continues to grow. Vigorous steps are required to bring this important endeavour to a conclusion.

14. The Soviet Union has been consistently urging that the possibility of adding new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction to the arsenals of States be ruled out altogether. It proposes that an appropriate international agreement should be concluded to this end.

No headway has been made in the solution of this important question, owing to the negative stand taken by some States which evidently would like to retain the possibility of developing entirely new means of annihilation, clearly counting on changing the strategic balance of forces to their advantage. The adventurist character of these calculations is no less obvious than their futility.

The sooner an end is put to any work in the field of the development of ever new means of mass destruction, the greater will be the confidence of the peoples in their future.

15. While advocating a comprehensive prohibition of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction, the Soviet Union is also ready to agree on the prohibition of individual new types of such weapons. This applies, first and foremost to neutron weapons, the threat of emergence of which in the arsenals of States is growing.

Jointly with other socialist countries, the USSR has put forward a draft international convention on the prohibition of the production, stockpiling, deployment and use of neutron weapons. But other countries capable of developing such weapons refuse to conduct negotiations on their prohibition.

At one time it was stated on the Soviet side that the Soviet Union would not begin the production of neutron weapons as long as the United States did likewise. Today this position of the USSR remains valid with respect to a possible emergence of neutron weapons in the arsenal of any other State. However, it is still the view of the USSR that the prohibition of neutron weapons on a contractual basis and on an international scale would be the best solution.

16. The Committee on Disarmament is working on the preparation of a treaty banning another type of weapon of mass destruction - radiological weapons, that is to say, weapons which affect living organisms by radiation resulting from the non-explosive decay of radio-active material. The USSR sees no reason why this work could not be completed in the immediate future.

#### Reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments

17. Soon after the end of the Second World War, in 1948, the Soviet Union made a proposal in the United Nations to the effect that, parallel with the prohibition of nuclear weapons, the permanent members of the Security Council should significantly reduce their ground, naval and air forces within one year. In the years that followed, the USSR and other Warsaw Treaty States put forward concrete proposals concerning the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments by States and, first of all, by large States.

This issue has been examined from different angles at various stages of the disarmament negotiations, and at present there is no aspect to it that could not become the subject of agreement if all States displayed the same political will as did the Soviet Union.

However, there is no progress in the solution of this issue. Some big Powers refuse even to start serious negotiations on the subject. That is why the Soviet Union deems it necessary to reaffirm the full validity of its proposals made two years ago - to cease the production of new types of conventional armaments of great destructive capability, to agree on the renunciation, by the permanent members of the Security Council and by countries which have military agreements with them, of the expansion of their armies and the build-up of their conventional armaments.

18. Some time ago efforts were made to achieve agreement on the limitation of the sale and supply of conventional armaments the cost of which at present runs into billions and leads to the saturation of the crisis areas with dangerous means of warfare. At the Soviet-American negotiations in 1978 on this subject, a start was made in formulating political-legal and military-technological criteria for the admissibility or inadmissibility of sales of arms. Agreement seemed to be within reach.

However, the American side suspended the negotiations and then refused to continue them altogether. Simultaneously, exports of American weapons sharply increased. All this runs directly counter to the interests of peace.

19. This autumn, the United Nations Conference on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects is scheduled to finish its work. The Soviet Union made its contribution to achieving progress at the previous stages of the international consideration of the matter. It will assist in bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Ending the arms race and disarmament at the regional level

20. The threat of war can be eliminated by radical disarmament measures taken on the global scale. It can be significantly lessened by the limitation or cessation of the arms race in individual areas. It can and should be dealt with also on the scale of individual regions of the world.

Of particular importance in this context is, of course, Europe, where the most numerous and powerful armed forces and armaments of the two military and political groupings of States are concentrated and confront each other. At present there are several basic courses of action to be vigorously followed here with respect to the European continent. As regards each and every one of them, the Soviet Union in co-operation with the other socialist States parties to the Warsaw Treaty takes an active and constructive attitude.

21. On the proposal of the USSR and other European States, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe considered the question of confidence-building measures, including notification of major military exercises and invitation of observers to attend certain military manoeuvres. The appropriate arrangements, as provided for in the Final Act, have been scrupulously carried out for five years already, thus helping to a certain extent to raise the level of confidence in Europe.

The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries advocate the broadening and deepening of confidence-building measures, the implementation of effective steps towards lessening military tension on the European continent, and the convening of a conference on military détente and disarmament in Europe. This initiative has met with wide response from nearly all States participating in the European Conference, and now many of them favour the adoption by the forthcoming all-European meeting in Madrid of a decision to convene such a conference. This is an important and promising endeavour. It requires first of all the overcoming of the opposition of those forces which would like to hamper the lessening of military tension in Europe.

22. The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, supported by broad peace-loving circles in Europe, favour the conclusion by all States participating in the European Conference of a treaty on the non-first use against each other of either nuclear weapons or conventional arms. It is quite obvious how beneficial such a step would be for the peaceful life of the peoples of Europe, and not only Europe, especially in view of the fact that the two world wars that brought untold suffering to mankind started on the European continent. Here, a response is due from the United States and its Western European allies.

23. The Vienna talks on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe that started also on the initiative of the socialist countries have now been going on for seven years. Hopes for progress frequently emerged in the course of the talks but every time the NATO countries raised new obstacles in the way to success. Recently the socialist States participating in the Vienna talks have taken new major steps to bring the positions of the sides closer together. What is required now is a constructive response from the Western countries. The Vienna talks can and must be brought to a successful conclusion.

24. As a result of the dangerous NATO actions aimed at undermining the military balance in Europe, the question of nuclear systems in that region has of late become particularly acute. A year ago the Soviet Union declared its readiness to reduce the number of medium-range nuclear-missile systems deployed in the western areas of the USSR, provided no additional nuclear-missile systems of that kind are deployed in Western Europe. The rejection by the United States and its allies of that proposal and the NATO decision to produce and deploy in some Western European countries new medium-range United States missiles have seriously aggravated the situation in Europe.

Recently the USSR put forward a new proposal - to discuss concurrently and on the basis of their organic link the issues pertaining to both medium-range nuclear-missile systems in Europe and United States forward-based nuclear systems. This constructive step on the Soviet part has aroused a new hope among the nations which have a stake in avoiding the further exacerbation of military tension on the European continent.

This is another question awaiting the response of the United States of America.

25. In the view of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, it would be of particular importance for strengthening peace to adopt measures for the relaxation of military tension in the area of the Mediterranean Sea, which washes the coasts of three continents - Europe, Africa and Asia. On 15 May 1980, the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty proposed in their declaration a broad programme of action to that effect. It includes the extension to the Mediterranean area of confidence-building measures, the reduction of armed forces in that area, the withdrawal from the Mediterranean Sea of warships carrying nuclear weapons and the renunciation of the deployment of nuclear weapons on the territories of European and non-European non-nuclear countries in the Mediterranean area.

The socialist countries are awaiting the reaction to these proposals of the other States concerned.

26. In recent years, it has become increasingly urgent to deal with the problem of strengthening security and lessening military tension in the region of the Indian Ocean, the coasts of which are inhabited by peoples who have liberated themselves from colonial domination. Their right to a peaceful and tranquil life and their desire to pool efforts and resources for their countries' economic and social development are challenged as a result of a dramatic expansion in the military presence and military activities of the United States and some of its allies in the region of the Indian Ocean.

The Soviet Union has invariably supported the desire of the littoral States of the Indian Ocean to make their region a zone of peace where all foreign military bases would be dismantled and where no one would jeopardize the security, independence and sovereignty of the littoral States. In the period 1977-1978, the Soviet Union conducted to that end bilateral talks with the United States on the limitation and subsequent reduction of military activities in the Indian Ocean. Those talks have also been broken off by the American side. The current build-up by the United States of its military presence in the Indian Ocean and the setting up of its military bases there, in particular on the island of Diego Garcia, run counter to the will of the peoples of that part of the world, increase tension and pose the risk of dangerous military conflicts.

The Soviet Union supports the United Nations decision to hold an international conference on the Indian Ocean in 1981. It is taking an active part in its preparation and is ready together with other countries to contribute to turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace.

#### Reduction of military expenditure

27. The reduction of military expenditure is one of the simplest and at the same time most effective ways to end the arms race and move on to disarmament. Agreement on the reduction by States of their military budgets would lead to the scaling down of military programmes and would release enormous funds for the needs of economic and social development.

As is known, the question of reducing military expenditure is on the agenda of the United Nations and of almost all forums where disarmament questions are discussed. But there is no progress; rather, the opposite is taking place: over the past two decades the aggregate annual military expenditure of States has at least doubled.

The Soviet Union proposed many years ago a reduction of the military budgets of all States, and first of all of major Powers. Today this is still its position. The United Nations has repeatedly pronounced itself in support of those initiatives. But some States, including permanent members of the Security Council, openly frustrate all the decisions and appeals to decrease military expenditure under various kinds of contrived pretexts.

For its part, the Soviet Union reaffirms its willingness at any moment to enter into negotiations with other States possessing a large economic and military potential, including all the other permanent members of the Security Council, on specific reductions in their own military budgets, either in terms of a percentage or in absolute figures. The Soviet Union is also ready to agree on the amount to be allocated for increased economic assistance to developing countries by each State which reduces its military budget.

International experience indicates that there is only one way to lasting peace and to the elimination of the threat of another world war - that of ending the arms race and moving to measures of real disarmament, ultimately to general and complete disarmament.

There are no insurmountable objective obstacles in the path of a durable and guaranteed peace. The main obstacle is the lack of political will on the part of certain specified States. This obstacle must be removed. Détente can be preserved and consolidated and the security of States can be reliably guaranteed if the States Members of the United Nations and the leaders of all States without exception display the necessary sense of responsibility, goodwill, commitment to the cause of peace and resolve to defend it.

History leaves no choice other than that of peaceful co-existence and mutually beneficial co-operation among States. The Soviet Union is convinced that life itself dictates the need to mobilize the efforts of all States, large and small, for achieving tangible results in curbing the arms race and in strengthening political and international legal guarantees for the preservation of peace. To that end, the United Nations can and must use the full weight of its authority.

The Soviet Union calls upon all States to cast aside all considerations and calculations of expediency, whether domestic or external, to renounce attempts to achieve military-strategic supremacy and striving for hegemony, global or regional, and to realize that the vital interests of all nations demand the elimination of the threat of a nuclear catastrophe and the ensuring of a peaceful future.

The Soviet Union is confident that this appeal, imbued with a concern for peace, is consonant with the hopes and aspirations of all the peoples of the world.

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