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CONSEQUENCES OF THE PROLONGATION  
OF THE ARMED CONFLICT BETWEEN  
IRAN AND IRAQ

SECURITY COUNCIL  
Forty-third year

Letter dated 25 August 1988 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 transmit herewith the text of the statement by the Soviet Government concerning the cease-fire on the Iran-Iraq front of 21 August 1988.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this text as an official document of the forty-second session of the General Assembly, under item 47, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) V. LOZINSKIY  
Acting Permanent Representative  
of the USSR to the United Nations

ANNEX

Statement by the Soviet Government

On 20 August 1988, the cease-fire on the Iran-Iraq front went into force. An event took place which opened the way for ending a long and bloody war. For the peoples of Iran and Iraq and all who are sincerely committed to the elimination of hotbeds of tension and to the establishment of peace and stability in the Middle East region, that event has been long in coming.

After the Geneva agreements on Afghanistan, the progress which has been made towards ending the protracted, destructive and dangerous conflict between Iran and Iraq marks a change in the international political climate.

The Soviet Government notes with satisfaction the important role of the United Nations, the Security Council and the Secretary-General himself in persuading Iran and Iraq to end hostilities and to begin negotiations on a political settlement of their differences. Security Council resolution 598 (1987), drafted through collective efforts and unanimously adopted on 20 July 1987, provided a just and balanced foundation - approved by both sides - for settling the conflict. This is a convincing example of the effectiveness of the United Nations and of the peace-making abilities of the Security Council. The Soviet Union is convinced that the unity of the Security Council and, in particular, of its permanent members, which emerged around resolution 598 (1987), must be preserved and strengthened.

From the early days of the Iran-Iraq war, the Soviet Union consistently called for its end, supported all mediation efforts and itself did much to end the bloodshed.

The Soviet Union realizes that, so far, only a first step has been taken. A long road lies ahead. The problems which gave rise to the conflict are complex, and many of them go far back in history. All this, however, only emphasizes the need to prevent the recurrence of war and not to miss a real opportunity to direct events towards a nurturing of the buds of peace.

Peace in the region is needed by everyone. Its benefits will be felt not only by Iran and Iraq but also by neighbouring countries. The restoration of order will soon have a positive effect on the region of the Persian Gulf, the whole world and international economic relations.

In this connection, the Soviet Government expresses its conviction that the international community, which justly expressed its concern at the Iran-Iraq conflict, will closely follow the course of the peaceful settlement. For its part, the Soviet Union is prepared, if so required, to show the utmost good will and to render assistance to the negotiation process and to the mission of the Secretary-General.

The attainment of a just and lasting peace between Iran and Iraq is an integral part of efforts to establish a comprehensive system of international peace and security. In the opinion of the Soviet Union, a significant step in that direction could be a future agreement on reducing the concentration of arms in the region. Thereafter, of course, it would be possible to study more comprehensive measures, in particular, for preventing the emergence of nuclear weapons in the region and eliminating the means of launching a massive attack, and for strengthening mutual confidence.

The question of guaranteeing the safety and freedom of shipping in the Persian Gulf should not remain a side issue. Reliance on unilateral acts of force has more than once led directly to the threat of a widened conflict. In the light of the new situation, any pretexts for justifying the presence in the Persian Gulf of navies of non-littoral States are completely untenable. The Soviet Union is ready to withdraw its vessels without delay if the other States which are not part of that region do likewise.

The Soviet proposals on the guaranteeing of the security of the sea lanes in the Gulf, are well known. An international agreement in that regard could, in our opinion, provide for a system of guarantees by the permanent members of the Security Council, or another similar mechanism. The Soviet Union, naturally, will seriously consider the views of the Persian Gulf States which, of course - first and foremost and more than anyone else - are interested in transforming the Persian Gulf into a zone of security, good-neighbourliness and co-operation.

The peoples of Iran and Iraq may be assured of the Soviet Union's good will, and of the readiness of our country to develop with them all-round, productive and mutually advantageous co-operation on a basis of equality.

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