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Non-use of nuclear weapons and prevention of nuclear war

Report of the Secretary-General

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BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

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The countries of the socialist community, including the Byelorussian SSR, consistently advocate the limitation and elimination of nuclear weapons, the permanent prohibition of the use of such weapons and, at the same time, the renunciation of the use of force in international relations. The Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, the Treaties prohibiting the emplacement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in outer space and on the sea-bed, and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, concluded during the 1960s and 1970s, played an important role in curbing the nuclear arms race.

An outstanding event in international life was the signing in Vienna in June 1979 of the Soviet-United States Treaty on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (SALT-II), which represented a real contribution to the limitation of the arms race both quantitatively and qualitatively and with regard to the most destructive means of waging war, namely strategic nuclear missiles. The conclusion of the SALT-II Treaty makes possible progress in other directions, too, in the limitation of the nuclear arms race and in disarmament.

The latest initiative of the USSR and other countries of the socialist community in introducing in the Committee on Disarmament a proposal for negotiations on ending the production of all types of nuclear weapons and gradually reducing their stockpiles until they have been completely destroyed and the participation in such negotiations of all nuclear-weapon States and some non-nuclear States deserves full support.

There is no doubt that the implementation of practical measures in this field should be considered in close conjunction with the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and the strengthening of international legal guarantees of the security of States. In this connexion, the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations would be of enormous significance.

A number of bilateral agreements on measures to reduce the danger of an outbreak of nuclear war and to prevent the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons concluded during the 1970s by the Soviet Union with the United States, France and the United Kingdom are aimed at preventing the possibility of an outbreak of nuclear war. Measures of this kind, designed to reduce the danger of nuclear war, must be expanded and improved.

The solemn declaration by the Soviet Union that it would never use nuclear weapons against those countries which renounce the production and acquisition of nuclear weapons and have no nuclear weapons on their territories was of fundamental significance for the security of the non-nuclear States. The USSR has also declared its readiness to conclude appropriate agreements with such countries.

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On the initiative of the Soviet Union, the General Assembly at its thirty-third session adopted a resolution on the preparation of an international convention on the non-use of nuclear weapons against those States which renounce the production and acquisition of nuclear weapons and have no nuclear weapons on their territories. The speedy preparation and conclusion of the convention proposed by the USSR would considerably reduce the possibility of the outbreak of nuclear war. The strengthening in every possible way of the régime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the creation of nuclear-free zones in various regions of the world, and the non-stationing of nuclear weapons on the territories of States where there are no such weapons at present would contribute towards the same ends.

The nuclear arms race represents the major danger to international peace and security today. The Byelorussian SSR is convinced that the efforts of all peace-loving States should be directed towards limiting and ending the nuclear arms race and averting the threat of an outbreak of nuclear war.

UKRAINIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

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The nuclear arms race represents the main danger to peace and international security. The efforts of States should therefore focus on measures directed towards eliminating the threat of nuclear war and excluding nuclear weapons in all their different forms from the arsenals of States. Since the first appearance of this most devastating weapon of mass destruction, the socialist countries, in particular the Soviet Union, have repeatedly put forward in the United Nations concrete proposals calling for an end to the nuclear arms race, the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and their complete elimination, and, at the same time, the renunciation of the use of force as a means of settling disputes between States. The Ukrainian SSR has consistently supported all these initiatives.

In recent years, a number of international agreements have been concluded which have to some extent limited the nuclear arms race. Of particular significance in the curbing of the nuclear arms race was the signing in Vienna in June 1979 by the leaders of the USSR and the United States of the Treaty on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and other Soviet-United States documents. The practical implementation of those documents would give a considerable impetus to further progress towards the limitation and reduction of arsenals of nuclear missiles and towards nuclear disarmament in general.

At the special session of the General Assembly, the Soviet Union put forward an important proposal in the field of nuclear disarmament - a proposal for ending the production of all types of nuclear weapons and gradually reducing their stockpiles until they have been completely destroyed. A detailed description of that proposal was given in spring 1979 by the socialist States which are members of the Committee on Disarmament at the meetings of that organ, which is a forum for multilateral negotiations on matters relating to disarmament.

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The Ukrainian SSR considers that an early start to preparatory consultations regarding negotiations on ending the production of all types of nuclear weapons and gradually reducing their stockpiles until they have been completely destroyed, and to the negotiations themselves, in which all the nuclear-weapon Powers and some non-nuclear States would participate, would in a practical way implement the decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its special session devoted to disarmament and would represent a significant step forward towards the prevention of nuclear war.

The Ukrainian SSR believes that the working out and implementation of measures aimed at ending the production of nuclear weapons and at destroying such weapons should be closely linked to the strengthening of political and international legal guarantees of the security of States. The General Assembly has already adopted a number of important resolutions the implementation of which could contribute in a significant way to the elimination of the threat of nuclear war and the strengthening of peace and the security of peoples.

In 1972, the General Assembly, in resolution 2936 (XXVII), solemnly declared, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations, their renunciation of the use or threat of force in all its forms and manifestations in international relations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and the permanent prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, because of the position taken by a number of States, that important declaration could not be given binding force. Prompted by a desire to strengthen the existing system for safeguarding peace and security and to establish a more reliable legal basis for important advances in the field of disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, the Soviet Union, at the thirty-first session of the General Assembly in 1976, proposed the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations, which would impose an obligation on all States to renounce the use or threat of force in all its forms and manifestations and to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons. However, this proposal, too, has so far not been implemented, for reasons which are well known.

The strengthening of the régime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the establishment on all continents of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the preparation of international agreements on questions relating to the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear-weapon States and the non-stationing of nuclear weapons on the territories of States where there are no such weapons at present would be a significant contribution towards eliminating the threat of a nuclear catastrophe.

In view of the above, the Ukrainian SSR considers that the efforts of the United Nations to solve the question of the non-use of nuclear weapons and to prevent nuclear war should focus on the adoption of effective measures in the field of nuclear disarmament and the simultaneous strengthening of political and international legal guarantees of the security of States, as well as measures to reduce the danger of the use of nuclear weapons.

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

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/2 October 1979/

As a result of the active efforts of the countries of the socialist community and of all peace-loving States in recent years it has been possible to avert the threat of a further world war; détente has become the dominant trend in international relations. The main task now consists in supplementing political détente with military détente.

Since the main danger to international peace and security arises from the nuclear arms race, the efforts of States should focus on measures directed towards the halting and reversal of the nuclear arms race, the permanent prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, and, at the same time, the renunciation of the use of force in international relations.

With this aim in view, the Soviet Union, since the first appearance of nuclear weapons, has consistently advocated and continues to advocate the implementation of practical steps in the field of the limitation and elimination of nuclear weapons and the adoption of parallel measures to strengthen international peace and security.

As a result of these efforts, a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements were concluded during the 1960s and 1970s which have had a certain restraining influence on the nuclear arms race. These include the important international Treaties banning nuclear-weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, and prohibiting the emplacement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in outer space and on the sea-bed, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and others.

An event of historic importance in the curbing of the nuclear arms race was the signing on 18 June 1979 in Vienna by the leaders of the USSR and the United States of the Treaty on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and related documents. The essence of this Treaty consists in the quantitative limitation of weapons and controls on their qualitative improvement. The full implementation of the documents signed in Vienna would open up new possibilities for halting the increase in the arsenals of nuclear missiles and ensuring the further quantitative and qualitative limitation and the significant reduction of such weapons.

At the present time, on the initiative of the USSR, the question of ending the production of all types of nuclear weapons and gradually reducing their stockpiles until they have been completely destroyed is on the agenda of international negotiations. At the beginning of February 1979, the USSR, together with other socialist countries, introduced in the Committee on Disarmament a concrete proposal that negotiations should be held on that question with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States and some non-nuclear States. The aim now is to begin consultations without delay with a view to preparing for practical negotiations on this question.

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In its endeavours to achieve genuine results in the halting of the nuclear arms race, the Soviet Union believes that the working out and implementation of measures in that field should be closely linked to the strengthening of political and international legal guarantees of the security of States. The conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations would be a major step in this direction. The parties to such a treaty, including, of course, the nuclear Powers, would assume an obligation to refrain from the use or threat of force employing any type of weapons, including nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction. The advantage of solving the question of the non-use of nuclear weapons in the context of the prohibition of the use of any type of weapons lies in the fact that all States - both nuclear and non-nuclear - would be placed in the same position.

Such an approach is also fully in keeping with the decisions of the United Nations. In particular, in resolution 2936 (XXVII) on the non-use of force in international relations and permanent prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, the General Assembly, on behalf of the States Members of the Organization solemnly declared their renunciation of the use of force in international relations and the permanent prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. The Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, notes the need for the adoption of measures aimed at preventing the outbreak of nuclear war and the use of force in international relations, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, including the use of nuclear weapons.

In conditions where nuclear weapons are retained in the arsenals of States and the nuclear arms race continues, the Soviet Union is doing everything in its power to exclude the possibility of the outbreak of nuclear war and to avert the threat of the use of nuclear weapons. With this aim in mind, the USSR has concluded a number of agreements with other nuclear States with a view to preventing the possibility of the outbreak of conflicts involving the use of nuclear weapons. These include such important documents as the agreement between the USSR and the United States on the prevention of a nuclear war (1973), the agreement with the United States on measures to reduce the danger of the outbreak of nuclear war and on measures to improve direct communications lines (1971), the exchange of letters between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and France on the prevention of the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons (1976), the agreement between the Governments of the USSR and the United Kingdom on the prevention of the accidental outbreak of nuclear war (1977). From the standpoint of the USSR, all nuclear-weapon States which have not yet done so should conclude with other nuclear States agreements concerning measures to reduce and avert the danger of nuclear war and to prevent the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, and those nuclear States between which such agreements already exist should improve and expand such measures.

The USSR has declared that it is opposed to the use of nuclear weapons; only extraordinary circumstances - aggression against the USSR or its allies by another nuclear Power - could compel it to resort to that extreme means of self-defence. The USSR has solemnly declared that it will never use nuclear weapons against those countries which renounce the production and acquisition of nuclear weapons and have

no nuclear weapons on their territories. The Soviet Union has also expressed its readiness to conclude special agreements on this matter with any such countries. The USSR has appealed to all the other nuclear Powers to follow the same course of action and to assume the same obligations.

At its thirty-third session, the General Assembly, on a proposal of the Soviet Union, adopted a resolution on the conclusion of an international convention on the non-use of nuclear weapons against those States which renounce the production and acquisition of nuclear weapons and have no nuclear weapons on their territories. The speedy preparation and conclusion of such a convention would considerably reduce the possibility of the outbreak of nuclear conflict and would strengthen the security of non-nuclear countries against the threat of the use of nuclear weapons against them.

The intensification of United Nations efforts with regard to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the expansion of the number of parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the establishment of nuclear-free zones in various regions of the world, and the implementation of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-third session, on the initiative of the USSR, on the question of the non-stationing of nuclear weapons on the territories of States where there are no such weapons at present would undoubtedly contribute towards the goal of preventing nuclear war.

Thus, the Soviet Union considers that a solution to the question of the non-use of nuclear weapons and the prevention of nuclear war can be achieved, first and foremost, through halting the nuclear arms race and ending the production of nuclear weapons and reducing and destroying stockpiles of such weapons; secondly, parallel with such measures, through the strengthening of political and international legal guarantees of the security of States providing for the prohibition of the use of both nuclear and other types of weapons and of force in general in international relations; and, third, through the adoption of measures directed towards strengthening the régime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and averting the danger of the outbreak of conflicts involving the use of nuclear weapons.
