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LETTER DATED 10 MARCH 1962 FROM THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS ADDRESSED TO THE ACTING
SECRETARY-GENERAL.

In reply to your letter of 2 January 1962 I have the honour to forward a letter from Mr. A.A. Gromyko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, setting forth the Soviet Government's views concerning the convening of an international conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 1653 (XVI) of 24 November 1961.

Please arrange for the above-mentioned letter to be circulated as an official United Nations document.

(Signed) P. MOROZOV
Deputy Permanent Representative of the
USSR to the United Nations

Your Excellency,

In reply to your letter requesting the Soviet Government's views concerning the convening of an international conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 1653 (XVI) of 24 November 1961, I would communicate the following.

The United Nations General Assembly laid a sound and encouraging foundation at its sixteenth session by adopting a declaration to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons for war purposes. The peoples, for whom the removal of the threat of a devastating war is a cherished dream, cannot but endorse the words of the declaration to the effect that the use of atomic and hydrogen weapons would be contrary to the spirit, letter and aims of the United Nations and to the rules of international law and would be a war directed against mankind in general.

The Soviet Union has for several years called insistently upon the United States of America, the United Kingdom and other States to assume a solemn and unconditional undertaking to renounce the use of nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction. It is therefore particularly gratifying to the Soviet Government that the United Nations has now expressed itself in favour of the assumption by States of such an undertaking.

The Soviet Government attaches great importance to the proposal made in the declaration for the convening of a special conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. The conclusion of such a convention should prove an important step towards the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons, their elimination from the armaments of States and the liquidation of all accumulated stocks of such weapons. The significance of agreements of this nature is confirmed by historical experience and has stood the test of time. It is known, for example, that the 1925 Protocol for the prohibition of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons had a great restraining effect and prevented the use of these types of weapons during the Second World War. If States succeeded then in barring the use of bacteriological and chemical weapons, it is all the more necessary to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, which would doom hundreds of millions of people to destruction.

His Excellency U Thant
Acting Secretary-General
of the United Nations
New York

The conclusion of a convention would help to relieve international tension, to strengthen confidence among States and, what is particularly important, to solve the problem of general and complete disarmament. It would thus constitute an important contribution to the cause of realizing the most cherished aspirations of all peoples - the elimination of the threat of nuclear-rocket war.

I have the honour to be, etc.

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

10 March 1962
