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LETTER DATED 17 APRIL 1962 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED NATIONS 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. K.V. Kiselev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, giving the views of the Government of the Byelorussian SSR on the convening of an international conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, as provided in General Assembly resolution 1653 (XVI) of 24 November 1961.

I trust you will arrange for the Minister's letter to be circulated as an official United Nations document.

(Signed) P. ASTAPENKO
Permanent Representative of the Byelorussian SSR
to the United Nations

Minsk, 10 April 1962

Sir,

In answer to your letter of 2 January 1962, in which, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 1653 (XVI), adopted on 24 November 1961, you asked for the views of the Government of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic on the possibility of convening a special conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons for war purposes, I have the honour to make the following statement.

The Government of the Byelorussian SSR has repeatedly drawn attention, in the United Nations and elsewhere, to the serious danger contained in the present world situation, namely, that States will use the vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons which they already have in their arsenals. The terrible consequences of such a catastrophe for mankind are obvious.

The Byelorussian SSR, which has consistently advocated general and complete disarmament under effective international control as soon as possible, also supports any other measures which would help to reduce international tension and thus tend to create better conditions for carrying out a programme of general and complete disarmament.

In the United Nations General Assembly, the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR has repeatedly voiced concern over the United Nations failure to take effective steps at the international level to help to reduce the danger of a sudden outbreak of nuclear war. The Byelorussian SSR firmly supported the Soviet Union's urgent appeals to the United States of America, the United Kingdom and other States to enter into a solemn undertaking to renounce the use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. At the fifteenth session of the General Assembly, the Byelorussian delegation appealed to all States to support the proposal for a declaration by which States would enounce the use of nuclear weapons.

The Government of the Byelorussian SSR notes with satisfaction that at the sixteenth session of the General Assembly the overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations were able to vote for such a declaration. The declaration on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons is a step in the right direction. In declaring that the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons is contrary to the spirit, letter and aims of the

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United Nations and, as such, a direct violation of the Charter of the United Nations, and that it is contrary to the rules of international law and to the laws of humanity, the General Assembly was expressing the view of all peoples of the earth, of all peace-loving forces which are striving to avert the threat of nuclear war.

The Government of the Byelorussian SSR supports the idea of convening a special conference to sign a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons. The conclusion of such a convention would be an important step towards the prohibition and complete destruction of all stockpiles of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons, which the socialist and other peace-loving countries have consistently advocated. The importance of conventions of this kind is confirmed by past experience and in particular by the 1925 Protocol on the prohibition of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons.

The conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons - the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction in existence - would help to improve the world situation, to strengthen States' trust in each other and to realize man's age-old dream of general and complete disarmament, and thus to ensure eternal peace on earth.

I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) K. KISELEV
Minister for Foreign Affairs of
the Byelorussian SSR
